

PIETY AND CHARITY IN LATE MEDIEVAL FLORENCE

Religious Confraternities from the Middle of the
Thirteenth Century to the Late Fifteenth Century

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SUMMARY

Devotional and charitable confraternities were a characteristic feature of late medieval Florence. The popularity of the former, and particularly the laudesi and flagellants, stemmed from the fact that they enabled the layman to participate in areas of worship which had been previously the exclusive domain of the clergy. The laudesi specialised in singing lauds which during the fifteenth century came to be performed by professional singers and musicians. This helped the companies to maintain their devotion, but at the same time removed the necessity for members to attend daily services. Moreover the laudesi societies' acceptance of bequests meant that some became as concerned to provide services for the dead as for the living. In contrast flagellant companies retained their vitality by emphasizing a strict penitential devotion and refusing to become involved in the administration of property.)

The most important charitable company was Or S. Michele, which was founded in the late thirteenth century to supervise the cult of the miraculous Madonna and to distribute the public's oblations to the poor. During the Black Death the company inherited a large fortune which changed the character of many of its activities. Successive governments sought to protect Or S. Michele from litigious heirs and corrupt company officials and then proceeded to borrow money to help cover its own debts and finance communal construction projects including the oratory of Or S. Michele. After the Black Death alms were no longer distributed to a large number of paupers, but to a more exclusive clientele. By the end of the Trecento Or S. Michele had a tarnished reputation and the cult had lost much of its vitality except as a centre for public festivals. This decline was shared by the Misericordia, and Florence was thereby deprived of the services of any large private charities until the foundation of the Buonomini di S. Martino in the mid-fifteenth century.

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ABBREVIATIONSA.S.F. Archivio di Stato, FirenzeB.N.F. Biblioteca Nazionale, FirenzeB.R.F. Biblioteca Riccardiana, FirenzeB.L.F. Biblioteca Mediceo-LaurenzianaA.C.J. Archivio della Compagnia di S. JeronimoB.L. British LibraryCap. C.R.S. Capitoli Compagnie Religiose SoppresseC.P. Consulte e PraticheConv.R.S. Conventi Religiose SoppresseC.R.S. Compagnie Religiose SoppresseL.F. Libri FabarumMSS. ManoscrittiO.S.M. Or S. MicheleProv. Reg. Provvisioni RegistriPrinted worksAnnales E.S.C. Annales - Économies, Sociétés, CivilisationsA.S.I. Archivio Storico ItalianoJ.W.C.I. Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld InstitutesM.E.F.R.M. Mélanges de l'école française de Rome Moyen Age-Temps modernesM.G.H.S.S. Monumenta Germaniae Historica ScriptoresIl movimento Il movimento dei disciplinati nel VII centenario del suo
inizio (Perugia 1260), Appendice 9 to Bolletino della
Deputazione di storia patria per l'Umbria (Perugia, 1962).RRRIISS Rerum Italicarum ScriptoresVillani Cronica di Giovanni Matteo e Filippo Villani a miglior
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INTRODUCTION

Historians and Italian confraternities

Lay religious confraternities, under names as diverse as guilds, societies, companies, brotherhoods and schools, were found throughout late medieval and early modern Europe¹⁾. They can be defined roughly as voluntary groups of laymen, who met together at regular intervals to do pious and charitable works in honour of a patron saint²⁾. But these confraternities did not exist in isolation, for their statutes, which regulated their activities, had been drawn up at their official foundation by members in consultation with representatives of the secular or regular clergy. These groups were therefore "lay" in as much as the vast majority of their members were laymen, and "religious" because their practices were usually loosely adapted from a monastic rule. But it would be a mistake to treat them

as though they all conformed to exactly the same model; the variation in nomenclature reflects differences in function as much between countries north and south of the Alps as between regions³⁾.

One of the most influential historiographical traditions in the study of lay piety has been the French school of "sociologie religieuse" under the leadership of Gabriel Le Bras⁴⁾. Le Bras has examined the way in which the practices of the official Church were received by the laity. Two fundamental works, which were brought out under the inspiration of Le Bras, were the books by Jacques Toussaert, on the "sentiment religieux" of late-medieval Flanders⁵⁾, and Paul Adam, on religious life in fourteenth-century France⁶⁾. Both authors take the parish as the point of departure and leave us with the impression that the laity rarely fulfilled their duties to a church, which was itself in a state of serious decline. However, one feature of the medieval Church which both historians single out as some proof that lay piety was still vital was the religious confraternity. Another scholar, John Bossy, has even gone as far as to suggest that fraternities were "an alternative model of the Church"⁷⁾, which gave the spiritual and social support which the official hierarchy no longer provided.

Recently Le Bras and his followers have been taken to task by the American historian Natalie Davis⁸⁾, for drawing too rigid a distinction between the practices of the Church, which she claims they see as the only true model for religious behaviour, and the activities of the laity which are regarded as merely "superstitious". She also suggests that these French writers are too isolationist in their approach and refuse to admit the importance of the influence of the laity on the Church. To right this imbalance the same critic has suggested that we should turn to a wider context and discuss the influence on religious change of other factors, such as the development

of the society and economy.

This debate is relevant to the study of confraternities because both sides take these groups as central to the understanding of lay religious piety. While the latter may be right in chiding the religious sociologists for adopting an overly rigid approach, the danger is that the study of "popular religion" will lead the historian to over-emphasize the originality of lay piety and fail to see the extent to which it was modelled on official practices. This conflict between the traditional historiography and the advocates of a broader approach is, as we shall see later, characteristic of studies of Italian confraternities.

The earliest confraternity historians were often the members themselves⁹⁾. Their accounts are without exception laudatory, but they do tell us something about the circumstances of the group's foundation and are useful because they record changes of meeting-places or oratories. Indeed this historical tradition continues among the followers of the few confraternities which survived the suppressions of the late eighteenth century. One good example is the Misericordia of Florence, which still provides an essential charitable service in the city. In the company's most recent publication, La Misericordia attraverso i secoli¹⁰⁾, more rigorous standards of scholarship have been applied than in earlier books¹¹⁾, but the underlying aim is still to produce an account of their "glorious" origins. This has led to an uncritical attitude towards sources and a tendency to skate over periods of decline, such as the company's relative inactivity during the 140 years after the Black Death¹²⁾. Another example are the Servite historians who were anxious to stretch the evidence to support their notion of the connection

between the origins of their Order and a laudesi society which met in SS. Annunziata¹³⁾. While the bias in these accounts stems from an intense pride in the history and traditions of these associations¹⁴⁾, it can at its worst lead to falsification of information even when the documents survive to prove the reverse.

The first overall view of Florentine companies was Lorenzo Mehus' survey of 1785¹⁵⁾. Previously confraternities had only featured as elements of general books on the city. Most notable were Ferdinando del Migliore's Firenze Città nobilissima illustrata¹⁶⁾ and Giuseppe Richa's Notizie istoriche delle chiese fiorentine¹⁷⁾. Both, as good Catholics, produced suitably pious descriptions of confraternal activities. But their real value lies in the information provided in their books and zibaldoni about documents which have now been lost¹⁸⁾.

In contrast to a period which was imbued with a Counter-Reformation respect for lay religious associations, the late eighteenth century was characterised by successive governments which attacked any organisation associated with the Church. The Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo I of Tuscany passed laws in 1783 and 1785 in order to nationalise ecclesiastical property¹⁹⁾. All Florentine confraternities were abolished with the exception of nine, which the Archbishop considered to be "necessarie, utili e vantaggiose all' edificazione del popolo"²⁰⁾. This background goes some way to explain the theme and title of Lorenzo Mehus' Dell'origine, progresso, abusi e riforma delle confraternite laicali²¹⁾. On the first page he discloses his intention, which is to show that confraternities were "contrarie ai sagri canoni, lesive della giurisdizione parrocchiale"²²⁾. Using both secular and Canon law, he was however unable to construct an unfavourable history for lay companies, although he used the Florentine law of 1419, which aimed to disband all

confraternities for their supposedly subversive activities²³⁾. Mehus singles out for especial abuse the flagellants, which he saw as "pernicious and odious to God"²⁴⁾. Although tendentious this book cannot be dismissed entirely as propaganda, because the author did make a determined effort to comb the Church councils for evidence to support his case and also describes some of the leading confraternities in the city. Perhaps his main short-coming, as with many historians of individual companies, was distortion of source material to fit his theme. Thus Clement VI's Bull of 1349 against the flagellant processions in Northern Europe was interpreted as a general condemnation of all disciplinati companies²⁵⁾.

Nineteenth century historians of Florence showed little interest in confraternities, apart from the occasional leaflet which was written about individual companies by an antiquarian member²⁶⁾. Instead literary critics published statutes and lauds as examples of pure Italian style from the Middle Ages, and part of the self-conscious attempt to create a national as opposed to a purely regional literature²⁷⁾. The concentration on statutes has proved very influential among historians of confraternities all over Italy. This type of source formed the basis of G.M. Monti's pioneering study of 1927²⁸⁾, in which he discussed lay companies in northern and central Italy. This book remains an indispensable primer for anybody approaching the subject for the first time, because he brings together information about a whole series of local studies. However, Monti's over-reliance on the notoriously unreliable archival inventories does sometimes make his book a misleading guide for any detailed study.

The single most important writer on Italian confraternities since the Second World War is G.G. Meersseman O.P., whose articles in Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum between 1949 and 1953 form the basis of all subsequent research²⁹⁾. In these lengthy

studies Meersseman dealt with three main types of Dominican fraternities: those dedicated to St. Dominic, St. Peter Martyr and the Virgin Mary. In common with Monti, he covered most of northern and central Italy, although groups in Tuscany figured prominently. However, he differed from Monti in two important respects: first he concentrated almost exclusively on those groups, which were founded in Dominican churches, and secondly he went beyond the statutes to study other documentation belonging to the Church. These included episcopal approbations, papal Bulls, records of land belonging to religious communities, and even confraternity membership lists. However, these articles were only the beginning of a series of studies, including a book on the Order of Penitents³⁰⁾, which have recently all been republished under the title, Ordo Fraternitatis³¹⁾.

Part of this collection is a paper which Meersseman gave in 1960 at a conference in Perugia to celebrate the 700th centenary of the flagellant movement of 1260³²⁾. The proceedings reflected quite accurately the state of confraternity scholarship in Italy at that time. Among the contributions were syntheses by Morghen, Manselli and Delaruelle³³⁾, although the majority tended to concentrate on single confraternities and publish their statutes. Indeed the latter practice is part of a tradition common to local periodicals all over Italy³⁴⁾. More original were the few pieces which were written by scholars in other disciplines, who sought to discuss the connections between confraternities and, for example, the history of art or the history of the theatre³⁵⁾. Another conference took place nine years later under the auspices of the same organisation, which had by now grown into a Centre for Flagellant Studies. Two papers made notable steps forward: Pier Lorenzo Melloni attempted to quantify the number of foundations throughout Italy, and the economic historian, Giuseppe Mira, examined the finances

of the main flagellant groups in Perugia³⁶⁾.

By the middle to late 1960s students of Italian confraternities had begun to widen their perspective by adopting a more analytical approach to their material. This led to a less static view of the history of lay companies, exemplified by Eduardo Grendi's work on Genoa³⁷⁾. Although his studies belong to a period beyond our own, the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, his articles are interesting because they placed these associations in a wider setting. Grendi showed, for instance, how the influence of the Counter-Reformation was reflected in changes in confraternity cults and the movement towards parish-based companies³⁸⁾.

In the early 1970s northern Italy remained the main centre for the more innovative research. Lia Sbriziolo's article, for example, on Venetian flagellant groups linked an examination of the Government's policy towards confraternities with the evolution of their main activities³⁹⁾. However, Brian Pullan's Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice is one of the most significant studies of Italian confraternities⁴⁰⁾. The focus of the book is Venetian poor relief in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but in the first part Pullan presents a picture of all the main activities of the Scuole Grandi. Thus he traces the formalisation of their devotion, showing, for example, how by the early sixteenth century the more affluent members had ceased to whip themselves and instead paid paupers to maintain the practice⁴¹⁾. At much the same time, the Scuole's charitable role expanded, as these companies acquired substantial endowments, the proceeds of which were directed first towards poor members and later also to impoverished nobles⁴²⁾. In this study Pullan succeeded in placing these organisations within a wider context and in giving us a sense of their evolution precisely

because he used a variety of sources from company statutes to financial and deliberative records as well as the records of the State.

The same more imaginative approach has characterised the most recent confraternity scholarship, much of which has been about Florence. The basis of Charles de La Roncière's article on the fraternities of the Florentine contado⁴³⁾, for example, was not just statutes but also a whole series of notarial and financial records. He used these sources to assess the role of these companies within the context of local society in the Val d'Elsa. During the last decade a number of studies have also been written, from a series of perspectives, about the confraternities of Florence itself. Massimo Papi, for example, has focused on the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in order to sketch in broad terms the evolution of the main types of companies in the city⁴⁴⁾. Rab Hatfield, on the other hand, looked at the activities of the compagnia de Maci⁴⁵⁾ in the fifteenth century and described the members' private devotional practices as well as their performances of public festivals. Similar activities also attracted the attention of Richard Trexler in his article on the boys' groups⁴⁶⁾. He traces the evolution of their functions in the fifteenth century from the preaching of sermons to performing plays and finally their central role under Savonarola as the instigators of the friar's programme of reform. Another company to have emerged in the same period was the Buonomini di S. Martino, which has been the subject of a study by Amleto Spicciati⁴⁷⁾, who placed their charitable policy within the social context of the late Quattrocento.

The role of confraternities in fifteenth century society is also the main focus of Ronald Weissman's Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence⁴⁸⁾. Detailed fiscal records and membership lists of one of the fifteenth-century "night" companies, the compagnia di S. Paolo, enabled him to produce a very interesting

account of the types of people who joined, the length of time they remained in the confraternity, and the average attendance throughout the year. While the records of the compagnia di S. Paolo act as a central pivot for Weissman's work, he does place the company in a much wider context by looking at the evolution of other Florentine groups in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and especially the way that they were affected by the series of government suppressions and the influence of the new devotional cults associated with the period immediately before and after the Council of Trent.

The last fifteen years have seen not only more research being done on Italian confraternities, but also the introduction of more sophisticated techniques to examine a wider range of source material. The main interest of many writers has been the role which these companies played in society. Thus for Trexler fanciulli societies were introduced partly at least to distract young men away from the attractions of homosexuality⁴⁹⁾, while for Weissman a confraternity provided a temporary refuge from the stress of everyday life⁵⁰⁾. The emphasis of the present work is, however, rather different. This is partly because detailed membership lists have not survived for the Trecento, which will be the main focus of our attention, but also because the intention is to study the development of first lay piety and then the poor relief provided by confraternities. In this way we will study the way in which devotional companies responded to general developments in religious practice and charitable companies to changes in Florentine society.

The first chapter will provide an overall picture of the evolution of Florentine confraternities between the middle of the thirteenth century and the late fifteenth century. This general view will be

based on the pattern of foundations of the major confraternities in Florence and will provide the context for the subsequent three chapters, which are detailed studies of the laudesi and disciplinati groups, followed by the services they provided for the dead. The ceremonies of both types of company will be seen within the context of contemporary liturgy, in order to emphasize how closely confraternity services were based on the practices of the official Church. In both cases the main sources used will be the statutes, which provide an invaluable guide to the form of each meeting and show how different were the activities of these two main types of Florentine devotional company.

However, statutes do have their limitations. While they may have recorded faithfully the confraternity's para-liturgy, their usefulness as guides to changing practices is often restricted because they were updated only periodically. In order to present a less static view of the history of confraternities we will also analyse their account books, since changes in expenditure frequently reflected accurately the decline of old activities and the emergence of new ones. We will then turn to the communal tax records for detailed information about how confraternity assets were constituted and the ways in which income was spent during the fifteenth century.

By combining all these records, a fairly comprehensive view of the main developments in the lives of both laudesi and disciplinati companies should emerge. In the process some subtleties in the practices of individual groups may be submerged in favour of a wider pattern. But this will not stem from a conscious desire to force recalcitrant material into a preconceived mould, but rather from the inadequacy of the sources. Successive floods⁵¹⁾ and government suppressions⁵²⁾ have meant that confraternity documents have been dispersed, leaving some companies relatively well-

documented but many with no records at all. The laudesi societies which met in S. Maria Novella and the Duomo, for example, possess relatively complete archives⁵³⁾, while others like the laudesi groups in S. Egidio and S. Croce only have statutes and those in S. Lorenzo have no surviving documentation⁵⁴⁾. A much larger number of statutes survive for the flagellants, but their financial records are rather thin, with the notable exception of a few companies, such as the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino or the compagnia di S. Jeronimo⁵⁵⁾. The archives of the last two companies also contain registers of attendance at services or punishments administered to erring members, thereby providing another way of checking how far rules were obeyed⁵⁶⁾.

By far the best documented confraternity in Florence was the compagnia della Madonna d'Or S. Michele. Founded in 1291 to foster the cult of the miraculous Madonna in the grain market⁵⁷⁾, the society soon developed another important function, the distribution of the public's oblations to the poor. The company developed rapidly into the single largest philanthropic institution in the city. Discussion of Or S. Michele will form the basis of the second half, which considers the charity administered by Florentine confraternities in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The history of Or S. Michele will be treated chronologically and divided into three sections: the period between the company's foundation until 1347, the decade following the Black Death, and the subsequent decline during the following 130 years. The survival of a whole series of detailed account books and deliberative records will enable us to examine questions which have relevance far beyond the confraternity itself. What, for example, was the policy of the Florentine Government towards a rich religious institution, at a time when the Commune itself was exceptionally short of funds? and did the company's affluence mean that the public no longer considered it necessary to support the Madonna? Did the cult, therefore, become moribund, as

Villani suggested ?⁵⁸⁾ or was the building of Orcagna's tabernacle a sign that the Madonna was still as popular as when she had been made the centre of the communal festival of St. Anne after the expulsion of the Duke of Athens?⁵⁹⁾

We shall also consider how the confraternity was affected by the very large number of bequests it was left during the Black Death, and especially whether the company itself was enriched or became merely an agency for the immediate disbursement of funds to heirs. Detailed registers of the paupers who were helped by the company will enable us to specify the extent to which Or S. Michele's charity reflected changes in the type of poverty in Trecento Florence. How much help was given, for example, to the starving crowds at the time of the famines of 1329 and 1347?⁶⁰⁾ Moreover, was the confraternity's inheritance put immediately at the disposition of the poor, and if so which types of pauper were given preference? Furthermore, how did the company's captains decide between conflicting priorities, especially during the depression of 1384 to 1393⁶¹⁾ when funds were in demand not only for charity but also in order to complete the construction of the oratory?

By the early fifteenth century when living conditions had begun to improve, the confraternity was already in decline, leaving Florence bereft of any large charitable institution which specialised in administering alms. In Chapter 8 we shall therefore consider the charitable role of other lay companies in Florence to see whether their activities made up for Or S. Michele's neglect of the poor.

In the first two sections we shall have studied the development of the devotional and charitable companies of late medieval Florence. In the final chapter we shall examine the evolution of both types of confraternity within the context of administration, office-holding and elections. This discussion will be broadened out and lead us towards the conclusion by studying the extent

to which confraternity statutes and organisations were based upon communal or monastic models. In this way we will seek to show how confraternities, unlike the secular corporations of a medieval city, have to be considered both in relation to the Church and the State.

FOOTNOTES

1. The main general works on late-medieval confraternities are J. Duhr, "La confrérie dans la vie de l'église", Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, XXXV (1939), 437-478 and E. Delaruelle, E.-R. Labande, P. Ouliac, L'Eglise au temps du grand schisme et de la crise conciliaire, 1378-1449 (Histoire de l'Eglise depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours, XIV (Paris, 1964), 666-693, and G. Le Bras, "Les confréries chrétiennes. Problèmes et propositions", Revue historique de droit français et étranger", 4th ser., XIX-XX (1940-1941), 310-363, and G.G. Meersseman, "Per la storiografia delle confraternite laicali nell'alto medio evo", Storiografia e storia. Studi in onore di Eugenio Dunre Theseider (Rome, 1974), 39-62. In what follows we shall use interchangeably the words Confraternity, Company, and Society.
2. This is a looser definition than the post-Council of Trent concept codified in the Codex iuris canonici quoted by Duhr, "La confrérie dans la vie de l'église", 437-439.
3. For Northern European confraternities see the bibliography in J. Duhr, "La confrérie dans la vie de l'église", 437-440 and Histoire de l'église, XIV, ed. Fliche, Martin, 666-669. No general surveys of religious confraternities in any other country than in Italy have been written, but the following studies are useful for forming some general idea of the differences between the companies in different parts of Europe: England: G.H. Cook, Medieval Chantries and Chantry Chapels (London, 1963 ed.); A. Hamilton Thompson, The English Clergy and their Organisation in the Later Middle Ages (Oxford, 1947); A.F. Johnston, "The Guild of Corpus Christi and the Procession of Corpus Christi in York", Medieval Studies, XXXVIII (1976), 372-384; A. Kreider, English Chantries. The Road to Dissolution (Cambridge, Mass., 1979); H.F. Westlake, The Parish Guilds of Medieval England (London, 1919); C. Phythian-Adams, "Ceremony and the citizens: The Communal Year at Coventry, 1450-1550", Crisis and Order in English Towns, 1500-1700, ed. P. Clark, P. Slack (London, 1972), 57-85. Flanders: J. Toussaert, Le sentiment religieux en Flandre à la fin du Moyen Age (Paris, 1965). France: P. Adam, La vie paroissiale en France au XIVe siècle (Paris, 1964); Assistance et charité (Cahiers de Fanjeaux 13) (Fanjeaux, 1978); J. Chiffolleau, "Les confréries, la mort, et la religion en Comtat Venaissin à la fin du moyen age", M.E.F.R., XI, (1979), 785-825 and La comotabilité de l'au-delà. Les hommes, la mort et la religion dans la région d'Avignon à la fin du moyen age (vers 1320- vers 1480), (Rome, 1980);

For Lyons see N.Z. Davis, "Poor relief, Humanism and Heresy" and "The Reasons of Misrule", in Society and Culture in Early Modern France (London, 1975), 17-64, 152-187; A.N. Galpern, "The legacy of late medieval religion in sixteenth century Champagne", The Pursuit of Holiness in late-medieval and Renaissance Religion, ed. C. Trinkaus, H.A. Oberman (Leiden, 1974), 141-176; La religion populaire en Languedoc du XIIIe siècle à la moitié du XIV siècle, (Cahiers du Fanjeaux II), (Toulouse, 1976); J.C. Schmitt, "Apostolat mendiant et société. Une confrérie dominicaine à la veille de la réforme", Annales ESC, XXVI (1971), 83-104. Germany: M. Baxandall, The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany (New Haven and London, 1980), 55-58; B. Moeller, "Religious Life in Germany on the Eve of the Reformation", Pre-Reformation Germany ed. G. Strauss (New York, 1972), 13-42; F. Rapp, Réformes et Réformation à Strasbourg. Église et société dans la diocèse de Strasbourg, 1450-1525 (Paris, 1974); J.-C. Schmitt, "La confrérie du rosaire de Colmar (1485)", Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum, XL (1970), 97-124.

4. See G. Le Bras, Études de sociologie religieuse (Paris, 1955-56), 2 vols.
5. J. Toussaert, Le sentiment religieux en Flandre.
6. P. Adam, La vie paroissiale en France.
7. J. Bossy, "The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe", Past and Present, XLVII (1970), 59.
8. N.Z. Davis, "Some Tasks and Themes in the Study of Popular Religion", The Pursuit of Holiness, 307-313.
9. See, for example, Archivio della compagnia di S. Jeronimo, "Memorie di nostra compagnia" (compiled in 1737); Archivio della compagnia di S. Jacopo della notte, Prologue to the sixteenth-century statutes; BNF, Magl. II.1.138: "Libro di varie notizie e memorie della venerabile Compagnia di S. Maria al Tempio"; ASF CRS 1189.1: "Memorie della venerabile compagnia di S. Giovanni Battista detto lo scalzo".
10. La Misericordia di Firenze attraverso i secoli. Note storiche, ed. C. Torricelli, M. Lopes Pegna, M. Danti, O. Checcucci (Florence, 1975).
11. For example, P. Landini, Istoria dell'Oratorio di S. Maria del Bigallo e della Venerabile Compagnia della Misericordia della città di Firenze (Florence, 1779), and reissued with a new introduction by P. Pillori in Florence, 1843.
12. La Misericordia di Firenze attraverso i secoli. Chapter 2, 41-54.
13. R.M. Tauci, "La Compagnia Maggiore di S. Maria", Studi Storici sull'Ordine dei Servi di Maria, III (1937), 45-66, and

more recently R. Tauci, "La Compagnia e l'Ordine dei Servi di Maria alla loro origine", Studi Storici sull'Ordine dei Servi di Maria, XVI (1966), 82-103.

14. See the claim of the Provveditore of the Misericordia in La Misericordia di Firenze attraverso i secoli, 9-10: "la Misericordia fiorentina [è] la più antica congregazione laica di carità e di fraterna assistenza esistente nel mondo...". On a recent visit to the Compagnia di S. Antonio Abbate I was told proudly by one of the members that the confraternity was even older than the Misericordia, when a quick look at their book of statutes in their own archive would have revealed that the company had begun in 1484. See Appendix 1, n. 7.
15. For elsewhere see the survey of Roman confraternities by C.B. Piazza, Eusevologio romano: ovvero, Delle opere pie di Roma (Rome, 1698). Muratori's brief survey is also useful: L.A. Muratori, "De piis laicorum confraternitatibus, earumque origine, flagellantibus, et sacris missionibus", Antiquitates Italicae medi aevi (Milan, 1742), VI, 449-482.
16. Firenze, città nobilissima illustrata (Florence, 1684).
17. G. Richa, Notizie Istoriche delle Chiese Fiorentine, divise ne' suoi Quartieri (Florence, 1754-1762).
18. Most valuable is F. Del Migliore's "Registro delle compagnie di Firenze", BNF, Magl. XXV.418, but see also the useful notebook by Carlo di Tommaso Strozzi, "Repertorio generale di tutte le memorie, e curiosità spettanti a chiese o a cose ecclesiastiche", Strozziene ser. III, ix bis., n. 335.
19. See A. Wandruska, Pietro Leopoldo. Un grande riformatore (Florence, 1968), 499-500.
20. Copy in Archivio della Compagnia della Misericordia Serie B, 97. The exempted companies were the "Buca di San Girolamo, Buca di Sant'Iacopo in Oltrarno, Compagnia della Misericordia, Compagnia dei Bacchettoni, Compagnia delle Stimate nei sotteranei di San Lorenzo, Compagnia di San Benedetto Bianco, Congregazione di San Salvatore, Compagnia di San Niccolò del Ceppo in Via de' Pandolfini, Compagnia di San Filippo Neri nella chiesa omonima". The first four still exist, as does the compagnia di S. Niccolò.
21. Published in Florence, 1785.
22. Mehus, Dell'origine, 5.
23. ASF, Prov. Reg. 109, ff 160r-162v.
24. Mehus, Dell'origine, 105 : "Questa fu una setta perniziosa e... odiosa a Dio".
25. L. Mehus, Dell'origine, 127-131.

26. For example, G.B. Uccelli, Della Compagnia di S. Maria della Croce al Tempio (Florence, 1864).
27. For example, L. del Prete wrote a "Discorso sugli articoli della lingua Italiana" as an introduction to the Capitoli della Madonna d'Orsanmichele dei secoli XIII e XIV (Lucca, 1859). See also the 1280-1298 "Libro degli ordinamenti della Compagnia di Santa Maria del Carmine", published by G. Piccini as part of a Scelta di Curiosità letterarie inedite o rare dal sec. XIII al XVIII, (Bologna, 1867), LXXXIX, or G. Rondoni's article on "Laudi drammatiche dei disciplinati di Siena", Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana, II (1883), 273-302.
28. Le confraternite medievali dell'alta e media Italia, (Venice, 1927), 2 vols. See also the general survey by the same author: "Le confraternite italiane dall'alto medio evo al concordato", Atti del congresso nazionale delle confraternite (Rieti, 1940), 83-110.
29. "Etudes sur les anciennes confréries dominicaines"; I: "Les confréries de Saint-Dominique", Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum, XX (1950), 5-113; II: Les confréries de Saint-Pierre Martyr", A.F.P. XXI (1951), 51-196; III: "La congrégation de la Vierge", A.F.P. XXII, (1952), 5-176; IV: "Les milices de Jesus-Christ", A.F.P. XXIII (1953), 275-308.
30. Dossier de l'Ordre de la Pénitence au XIIIe siècle (Friburg, 1961).
31. Ordo fraternitatis. Confraternite e pietà dei laici nel medioevo (Rome, 1977).
32. "Disciplinati e penitenti del Duecento", Il movimento dei disciplinati nel settimo centenario dal suo inizio (Perugia, 1962), 43-72.
33. R. Morghen, "Ranieri Fasani e il Movimento dei Disciplinati del 1260", 29-42; R. Manselli, "L'anno 1260 fu anno gioachimitico?", 99-108; E. Delaruelle, "Les grandes processions de penitents de 1349 et 1399", 109-145.
34. The main periodical to print confraternity statutes is the Bollettino della deputazione di storia patria per l'Umbria. A useful guide to what they have published is Bollettino, LXXVI-LXXVII (1980), 375-378. For other local studies see: G. Prunai, "I capitoli della compagnia di S. Domenico in Campo Regio", Bollettino senese di storia patria, N.S. XVIII (1946), 117-156; P. Pesce, "Gli statuti (1329) della Scuola di S. Maria dei battuti di Treviso", Archivio Veneto, CVIII (1977), 5-41; O. Marinelli, La compagnia di San Tommaso d'Aquino di Perugia (Perugia, 1960); G. de Sandre Gasparini, Statuti di confraternite religiose di Padova nel medio evo (Fonti e ricerche di storia ecclesiastica padovana 6), (Padua, 1974).

35. G. Gasca Queirazza, "Le confraternite dei Disciplinati in Piemonte. Loro influenza sulla diffusione del volgare di tipo toscano", Il Movimento, 328-337; A.M. Terruggia, "In quale momento i Disciplinati hanno dato origine al loro teatro?", Il Movimento, 434-459; A. Prandi, "Intorno all'i conografia dei Disciplinati", Il Movimento, 496-508.
36. P.L. Meloni, "Topografia, diffusione e aspetti delle confraternite dei disciplinati", Risultati e prospettive della ricerca sul movimento dei disciplinati (Perugia, 1972), 15-98; G. Mira, "Primi sondaggi su taluni aspetti economico-finanziari delle confraternite dei disciplinati", Risultati, 229-260.
37. E. Grendi, "Le compagnia del SS. Sacramento a Genova", Annali della facoltà di giurisprudenza, Università degli studi di Genova, IV (1965), 454-480; "Morfologia e dinamica della vita associativa urbana. Le confraternite a Genova fra e secoli XVI e XVIII", Atti della società Ligure di storia patria, N.S. V (1965), 241-311; Confraternite e mestieri nella Genova settecentesca", Miscellanea di Storia Ligure, IV, Genova (Alessandria, 1966), 237-65.
38. E. Grendi, "Morfologia e dinamica della vita associativa urbana", 241-311.
39. L. Sbriziolo, "Per la storia delle confraternite veneziane: dalle deliberazioni miste (1310-1476) del Consiglio dei Dieci. Le scuole dei battuti", Miscellanea Gilles Gerard Meersseman (Padua, 1970), II, 715-763. See also by the same author: Le confraternite veneziane di devozione (Rome, 1968);
40. B. Pullan, Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice. The Social Institutions of a Catholic State, to 1620 (Oxford, 1971). See also R.C. Mueller, "Charitable Institutions, the Jewish Community, and Venetian Society", Studi Veneziani, XIV (1972), 37-82; and M.J.C. Lowry, "The Social World of Nicholas Jensen and John of Cologne", La Bibliofilia, LXXXIII (1981), 193-218. Richard Mackenney has recently completed a Ph.D. thesis for the University of Cambridge on the Scuole Piccole in Venice. I much regret that at the time of writing I was unable to consult this work.
41. Pullan, Rich and Poor, 51.
42. Ibid., 84-85, 157.
43. Charles de la Roncière, "La place des confréries dans l'encadrement religieux du contado florentin: l'exemple de la Val d'Elsa", M.E.F.R.M., LXXXV (1973), 31-77, 633-671. See also his "L'influence des franciscains dans la campagne de Florence au XIVe siècle. (1280-1360)", M.E.F.R.M., LXXXVII (1975),

27-103, which deals with related material.

44. M.D. Papi, "Confraternite ed ordini mendicanti a Firenze. Aspetti di una ricerca quantitativa", M.E.F.R.M., LXXXIX (1977), 723-732. See also his "Per un censimento delle fonti relative alle confraternite laiche fiorentine: primi risultati", Da Dante a Cosimo I. Ricerche di storia religiosa e culturale toscana nei secoli XIV-XVI, ed. D. Maselli (Pistoia, 1976), 92-121; "Le associazioni laiche di ispirazione francescana nella Firenze del Due-Trecento", I frati penitenti di San Francesco nella società del Due e Trecento, ed. M. D'Alatri (Rome, 1977), 221-243; "Devozione laicale e forme associative nel territorio Valdesano: la confraternita di Sant' Appiano", Biblioteca della 'Miscellanea storica della Valdelsa', Società storica della Valdelsa, III (1980), 101-112; "Santa Maria Novella di Firenze e l'outremer domenicano. I fratres peregrinantes inter gentes", Toscana e terrasanta nel medioevo, ed. F. Cardini (Florence, 1982), 87-101.
45. Rab Hatfield, "The compagnia de' Magi", J.W.C.I. XXXIII (1970), 107-161.
46. R.C. Trexler, "Ritual in Florence: Adolescence and Salvation in the Renaissance", The Pursuit of Holiness, 200-264. Many of Trexler's earlier works on ritual are summarised in his Public Life in Renaissance Florence (New York and London, 1980).
47. A. Spicciiani, "The 'poveri vergognosi' in fifteenth-century Florence, The first thirty years' activity of the Buonomini di S. Martino", Aspects of Poverty in Early Modern Europe, ed. T. Riis (Stuttgart, 1981), 119-182.
48. R.F.E. Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence (New York and London, 1982).
49. Trexler, "Ritual in Florence", 234-245. But see also the remarks of N.Z. Davis, "Some Tasks and Themes in the Study of Popular Religion", The Pursuit of Holiness, 318-326 and J. Bossy's Review Article "Holiness and Society", Past and Present, LXXV (1977), 124-126.
50. Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 91-92.
51. The sixteenth century statutes of the compagnia di S. Jacopo in S. Jacopo Sopr'Arno already complained of floods destroying manuscripts: "nel principio (c1300) di detta compagnia si adunava in uno locale sotto la chiesa di S. Jacopo, e un' inondazione del fiume Arno guastò il loro piccolo archivio", Capitoli, Archivio della Compagnia di S. Jacopo della notte. One of the worst floods was in 1966 when the records of

confraternities were especially badly damaged in the Archivio di Stato di Firenze. See A. D'Addario, "I danni subiti dall'Archivio di Stato di Firenze nell'alluvione del novembre 1966", Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato, XXVI (1966), 428-490.

52. See Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 165-179.
53. See Conv.R.S. 102.290-326 and CRS 2170-2190 respectively.
54. See above, Chapter 2.
55. CRS 903-936 for the first and the second Archivio della Compagnia di S. Jeronimo.
56. See Chapter 3 for discussion of these records.
57. See Appendix I, n.
58. M. Villani, Cronica, 1,7.
59. G. Villani, Cronica, XII, 17. The celebrations began in 1344. See Chapter 5.
60. G. Villani, Cronica, X, 118; XII, 83.
61. See above, Chapter 7, section 3.

CHAPTER 1

The Development of Florentine Confraternities
1240-1495

One of the major problems to have faced the Church in the early thirteenth century was how to contain lay religious enthusiasm within the bounds of orthodoxy. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 drew a strict dividing-line between beliefs and practices acceptable to the Church and those which were branded as heretical¹⁾. This set in motion a process which was to prevent the widespread proliferation of groups outside the control of the official hierarchy, partly by an active campaign against those tainted with heterodoxy and partly by the establishment of positive alternatives.

The Mendicant Orders were the Church's greatest champions and

helped to harness the very stream of lay devotion which might have proved a serious threat to the Church²⁾. In their sermons the friars provided a simple pastoral theology which was adapted specifically to the religious needs of the rapidly growing urban population³⁾. But in addition to attracting large audiences, the new Orders encouraged their congregations to establish a series of religious associations which enabled the layman to deepen his personal piety. Indeed the Mendicants remained the single most important influence for the foundation of religious confraternities throughout late medieval Italy. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries 41 percent of all Florentine companies met in the five main friaries⁴⁾.

The two most important precursors of the fully fledged religious confraternity, which forms the centre of this study, were the Order of Penitence and the Societies of Faith⁵⁾. Although each performed very different functions, they were both conceived initially as an aid to the friars, rather than as independent lay companies. The Penitents in Florence, for example, were founded in c.1220 in order to administer the bequests and donations which had been left to the Dominicans and then to distribute the proceeds to the poor⁶⁾. Indeed charity assumed an increasingly important part of the Penitents' activities, for they founded and ran two of the most important hospitals in Florence: S. Paolo and S. Maria Nuova⁷⁾. However, despite the growth in the scope of their service to the community these fraternities proved impractical for many Florentines because the statutes prohibited them from taking oaths or carrying arms⁸⁾. Male members were excluded effectively from any kind of civic or military service. This helps to explain the attraction of the later devotional companies, which placed no such restrictions on members' enactment of

normal civic duties. Neither did the Societies of Faith which were engaged in aiding the Inquisition in its fight against heresy⁹⁾. The Florentine branch, which already existed when Peter Martyr visited the city in 1244-45, was a loosely organised society under the leadership of a series of captains¹⁰⁾. The emphasis in their campaign against heresy was, however, less on militancy than the personal persuasion of the Waldensians and Cathars of the error of their ways¹¹⁾.

St. Peter Martyr also emphasized the value of inculcating into the laity the basic precepts of Catholicism in order to combat ignorance and heresy. The company which he is supposed to have founded in S. Maria Novella in 1244 had an important educative role¹²⁾. This was a laudesi society, whose members learned simple devotional recitations and lauds, which were composed in the vernacular and sung at services which all brothers attended regularly. In this way laymen were able to participate in areas of worship which had previously been the exclusive domain of the clergy.

The laudesi companies, which spread rapidly throughout Central Italy, were not, however, the only form of devotional societies active in late-medieval Florence. The other main type were the disciplinati. Although voluntary flagellation was not new to the Catholic Church, laymen had begun to whip themselves only within the previous 200 years under the inspiration of Peter Damian¹³⁾. The Mendicants, however, provided the main influence in promoting a practice which spread eventually throughout most levels of society in Italy. The popularity of this devotion reflected the extent to which the laity had absorbed the friars' emphasis on penance and the incarnate life of the Son of God¹⁴⁾. Self-chastisement was seen by the laity as a way in which they also could participate

TABLE 1.1 Foundation of Florentine confraternities, 1240-1495

Period	Laudesi Nos.			Flagellant Nos.			Boys Nos.			Charitable Nos.			Trade Nos.			Other Nos.			Total Nos.			Total %	
	a	b	a+b	a	b	a+b	a	b	a+b	a	b	a+b	a	b	a+b	a	b	a+b	a	b	a+b	a+b	%
1240-49	3	-	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	100	5	100
1250-99	4	3	58.3	3	-	25	-	-	-	1	-	8.3	1	-	8.3	-	-	-	9	3	99.9	12	99.9
1300-49	2	4	26.1	4	2	26.1	-	-	-	2	-	8.7	1	2	13	-	6	26.1	9	14	100	23	100
1350-99	-	2	6.9	16	2	62.1	-	1	3.4	1	-	3.4	-	2	6.9	-	5	17.2	17	12	99.9	29	99.9
1400-49	-	-	-	6	5	31.4	5	2	20	1	-	2.9	7	2	25.7	-	7	20	19	16	100	35	100
1450-95	-	-	-	3	20	44.2	1	1	3.9	-	-	-	2	1	5.8	5	19	46.1	11	41	100	52	100
Total	9	9	11.5	32	29	39.2	6	4	6.5	7	-	4.4	11	7	11.5	5	37	26.9	70	86	100	156	100

a = confraternities for which a definite date of foundation is known.

b = confraternities for which exact foundation date is not known; included under year of earliest documentation.

(Source: Appendix 1)

in the suffering of Christ.

In addition to the laudesi and disciplinati societies, confraternities with other activities were also founded and ranged from the large charitable societies, such as Or S. Michele and the Misericordia, to the smaller groups of boys or artisans. A series of tables has been drawn up in order to establish more exactly when the majority of each type of confraternity was founded. The source for the tables is Appendix I which is a provisional list of confraternities which were active in Florence between 1240 and 1495.

The first table divides up the 156 companies according to the period in which they were founded or first documented. The problem which then arises is to establish how many confraternities there were in Florence in any one year, for some may have ceased to meet, while in other cases the documents have been lost or the company's name or meeting-place was changed. Table 2 addresses this question by summarising all those groups which were known to have been active in three twenty-year periods in the middle of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Finally we will turn to a census from the middle of the 1520s. Although it is just beyond our chronological limit, its usefulness lies in the fact that it is the first attempt by the Government to draw up a comprehensive list of confraternities in Florence.

Taking the pattern of foundations as a measure of the popularity of confraternities, we can see that the laudesi and the disciplinati had a complementary development (See Table I). The majority of the former were established within the last sixty years of the thirteenth century. Indeed 58.3 percent of new companies in this period were laudesi, compared with 25 percent flagellant, and 8.3 percent charitable. However, after 1300 the proportion of new laudesi companies began to decline, until by 1400 they ceased altogether. But as one type of devotion became less vital, another, that of the disciplinati, grew. From 26.1 percent of the total of new foundations in 1300 to 1349, the flagellants came to account for 62.1 percent during the fifty years following the Black Death and maintained a surprisingly high level even up to the second half of the fifteenth century.

The reasons for the popularity of particular types of confraternity in a given period are not always easy to explain. For example, one might have expected a large increase in the number of disciplinati rather than the laudesi companies after the 1260 flagellant movement, which is supposed to have popularised the practice of self-scourging among the laity¹⁵⁾. One of the factors which may have contributed to the paucity of flagellants in this period was that Manfred had forbidden his subjects, which included the Florentines, from participating in this movement¹⁶⁾. While this may have had some effect, confraternity foundations in states outside Imperial control also point to the growth of flagellant foundations in the fourteenth century rather than the second half of the thirteenth century¹⁷⁾.

Other popular religious movements as well as wars, floods and plagues have been held responsible for the proliferation of confraternities¹⁸⁾. Millard Meiss, for example, suggested that the popularity of flagellants was linked to the general

feeling of "fear, guilt and sorrow" following the Black Death¹⁹⁾. Jacques Chiffolleau noted an increase in confraternities in Avignon in the second half of the fourteenth century and suggested that they provided some kind of security at a time when society was being constantly disrupted by frequent epidemics²⁰⁾. While both authors may have helped to explain why lay companies should have multiplied in the second half of the Trecento, neither theory accounts for the continued popularity of the flagellants in the Quattrocento, when plague attacks became less virulent and society was more stable with the general increase in prosperity²¹⁾. Furthermore, except perhaps in the case of the Bianchi movement of 1399 to 1400²²⁾, it is very difficult to attribute the foundation of individual confraternities to specific events, because fourteenth century statutes very rarely give any idea of why a company was established²³⁾.

While outbreaks of popular fervour and natural disasters probably did provide a general influence to the spread of voluntary flagellation, a more significant influence was the contemporary preoccupation with penitence. It keeps reoccurring as a subject of not only the sermons and treatises of conventual and Observant friars, but also the laity themselves²⁴⁾.

Indicative of the Florentines' interest in penitence was the establishment of a new type of flagellant company in the fifteenth century called the compagnia della notte²⁵⁾. Members followed an especially strict regime, meeting at night rather than the day and spending long periods in silence and prayer. These companies were also differentiated from other types of confraternity because each one was linked to a group of boys and young men²⁶⁾. The activities of the latter were based on the adult model, but without the practice of flagellation²⁷⁾. Nevertheless penance was a leading theme of their devotion, as can be seen from a collection of sermons

which were delivered by the members of one fanciulli society during Holy Week²⁸⁾.

In addition to these confraternities, there were others in Florence which specialised in giving alms to the poor. However, after the mid-thirteenth century there were few in comparison to the devotional companies. It is not clear why more of these charitable groups were not founded, but the reason may be partly that other corporations such as monasteries and hospitals already existed to provide charity. Contemporaries may also have felt that societies such as Or S. Michele and the Misericordia operated on a sufficiently large scale to obviate the necessity for the foundation of other similar organisations.

This last argument could not, however, have been applied in the fifteenth century for the traditional charities declined and only the Buonomini di S. Martino attempted to cater for the indigent in any systematic fashion²⁹⁾. Instead another more specialised type of confraternity began to multiply: those associated with individual trades. A few groups of artisans had already appeared in the previous century, but their history is obscured by lack of documentation, principally because they had been discouraged both by the guilds and the Government³⁰⁾. The appearance of these trade companies in the fifteenth century has led a recent historian to suggest that by the 1480s artisans were assuming an important role in Medicean political strategy. While this may have been true, their statutes indicate that their activities were not appreciably different from those of other confraternities³¹⁾. Indeed artisan companies provided an important service to their members at a time when guilds in Florence are supposed to have been on the decline³²⁾. Men from the same trade were given a devotional framework to their lives and also a system of poor relief when they fell ill or became too old to work.

So far, then, we have given a general idea about the development

of the main types of confraternity in Florence between 1240 and 1495. The final line of Table 1 suggests that even though a specific function cannot be attributed to as many as 26.9 percent of the 156 companies, the flagellants had become by far the most numerous by the late fifteenth century. However, since these calculations may exaggerate the number of groups in operation, we will turn to those companies which were definitely in existence in three periods between the middle of the thirteenth century and the middle of the fifteenth century (See Table 1.2).

TABLE 1.2 Confraternities known to have been active in Florence in 1240-60, 1340-60, 1440-60

Period	Laudesi		Flagellants		Boys		Charitable		Trade		Other		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1240-60	4	66.7	-	-	-	-	2	33.3	-	-	-	-	6	100
1340-60	13	39.4	9	27.3	-	-	5	15.1	3	9.1	3	9.1	33	100
1440-60	12	12.5	47	49	9	9.4	5	5.2	12	12.5	11	11.4	96	100

(Source: see footnote 33.)

Although we may now have underestimated the number of confraternities which met in Florence, we can be more precise about how many of each type were active in the city at any one time. For example the laudesi companies in the middle of the Trecento accounted for 39.4 percent and the flagellants 27.3 percent of the total. This confirms that the former really were more numerous in the first half of the fourteenth century and that 100 years later their respective positions were reversed. Thus the figures available suggest that from 1440 to 1460 there were about 36 percent more flagellants than laudesi companies.

Contemporary interest in the former is also confirmed by two mid-Quattrocento lists which have been reproduced in Appendix 2. The first contains the names of all the disciplinati groups as well as the fanciulli which were authorised by S. Antonino to appear in procession on the Feastday of St. John the Baptist in 1454. The companies were organised according to their respective quarters; there were eleven in S. Spirito, seven in S. Croce, eleven in S. Maria Novella and eight in S. Giovanni. The importance of Mendicant churches as centres for flagellant companies is confirmed by this source, because over a third met in S. Maria Novella and S. Croce alone. The other list, from Benedetto Dei's Ricordanze, is dated 1466, and includes the names of thirty-three "compagnie di battuti in Firenze". However, as can be seen from Appendix 2, he describes some groups in slightly facetious terms, although whether they are of his own invention or merely popular titles is not clear. For example, the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino in S. Maria Novella is "insalata di più erbe", a company in S. Spirito is called "del pippione", which has the double meaning of nestling pigeon or fool, while the compagnia della Cornacchia is also known as galza or a crow. Although very different in their approach the lists of S. Antonino and Benedetto Dei do suggest the popularity and importance of flagellant companies in Florence in the middle of the fifteenth century.

Finally we will turn to the census of 1524-27, because as an official survey it provides the only more or less reliable source for the number of confraternities in Florence:

TABLE 1.3 Confraternities in Florence listed in census of 1524-27

Laudesi ¹		Flagellant		Boys		Charitable		Trade		Other		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
29	27.9	34	32.7	10	9.6	3	2.9	8	7.7	20	19.2	104	100

1. Laudesi were in fact described in the document as "di stendardo", a term which emerged in the late fifteenth century.

(Source: BNF N.A. 987: cf. Appendix 3)

At first glance little seems to have changed since the mid-Quattrocento for the number of companies remained about the same. However, remembering that Table 2 was itself not a full list, it suggests either that some companies had disappeared in the interim or that the 1520s census was incomplete. Both were probably true. The years between 1494 and 1529 were among the most turbulent in the life of Florence and conditions were not finally placed on a firm footing until the establishment of Cosimo I in 1537. Confraternities suffered considerably. They had been suppressed periodically in the Quattrocento because they were suspected as centres of conspiracy, but few of the laws were as disruptive as those introduced with almost every change of government after 1494³⁴⁾. It is hardly surprising, then, that the number of

confraternities should not have multiplied or that some should have disappeared³⁵⁾.

Another feature of the census which differentiated it from earlier lists of confraternities was the slight variation in terminology (see Appendix 3). While both the familiar disciplinati and fanciulli were present, a new name di stendardo appeared to replace the older title of laudesi³⁶⁾. The transition is not without importance because it suggests a change in the emphasis of these companies' activities by the early sixteenth century. The laudesi companies of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had been intended primarily as organisations which would allow members to develop their own personal devotion. However, in the fifteenth century many of these societies came to be influenced by the increased emphasis on public display and pageant. Confraternities not only lavished more attention on their private festivals, but also at public events, such as the celebrations for St. John the Baptist on 24 June³⁷⁾. On these occasions companies carried banners, which are the stendardi of the census of the 1520s, and symbolised the new, more public nature of their activities.

The census from the mid-1520s is also interesting as the first attempt by a Florentine government to establish how many confraternities there were in the city and what were their total membership. This represents a final stage in the State's policy towards achieving a greater control over societies, which for centuries had had a rather ill-defined legal status. The process had begun with a law of 1329³⁸⁾, when the leading Florentine companies were granted the right to elect their own syndics, and had accelerated with the Black Death. The Government, wishing to prevent corruption and to control wealth, passed a series of provisions which enabled the Priors to supervise the property of the largest charities

such as Or S. Michele and the Misericordia³⁹⁾. But if the Trecento saw the Signoria attempting to control the confraternities' wealth, the fifteenth century saw it anxious about their political role. A series of suppressions followed each other from 1419 onwards, so that, as a recent historian has asserted, the vitality of confraternities had been sapped by 1527⁴⁰⁾.

Closer supervision was not just the concern of the State, for in the early decades of the fifteenth century the Church also began to intervene more directly in the affairs of confraternities. Although theoretically all company statutes had to be approved by the bishop or his vicar, there seems to have been little consistent policy in the Trecento. While the statutes of some of the largest groups did receive the official imprimatur, the constitutions of many of the smaller laudesi and disciplinati companies show little sign of having been presented to the bishop⁴¹⁾.

In the Quattrocento, however, the constitutions of the majority of fraternities were taken to the episcopal palace for approval. The reasons for the change in attitude towards confraternities are not entirely clear, but the most important factor must have been the difference between the characters and levels of dedication of the local bishops. Given the frequency with which the bishops changed and the high level of non-residence, especially in the second half of the Trecento⁴²⁾, it is hardly surprising that there was not a consistent policy towards organisations which lay at the very fringe of the Church. In Quattrocento Florence the episcopacy was inspired to greater activity by the visits of two Popes, Martin V and Eugenius IV⁴³⁾. In the 1420s, for example Bishop Andrea Corsini began a much more attentive supervision of the Church's organisation and lay companies⁴⁴⁾. But by far the most active bishop was Antonino Pierozzi, who was a papal appointee, and continued the reform of the Florentine Church which Eugenius had begun⁴⁵⁾.

Antonino's combination of practicality with piety was important for his dealings with confraternities⁴⁶⁾. He was concerned to provide lay Florentines with a practical guide for their lives, and at the same time maintain a strict line between their activities and those of the clergy.

Confraternities helped him to do this because they allowed members to deepen their personal devotion while ensuring that they confessed and took communion at least once a year⁴⁷⁾. However, S. Antonino also scrutinised a large number of statutes, to make sure that they conformed to the basic rules of the Church⁴⁸⁾. He was also firm about reserving to the clergy the right to discuss the Sacraments and admonished the members of one confraternity for saying "parole contro la reverentia e integrità della sancta fede"⁴⁹⁾. Antonino is also supposed to have taken a special interest in both the compagnie della notte and the boys' companies. He became the spiritual adviser of at least one of the former, and organised the latter into a loose federation under the Priors of the Badia Fiorentina and S. Marco⁵⁰⁾.

S. Antonino's interest in confraternities can probably be attributed as much to his training as a Dominican as to his desire to fulfill properly his duty as the head of the Florentine diocese. We shall continue to encounter the influence of the Mendicant Orders on the evolution of lay religious in both the history of the laudesi and disciplinati companies, which form the subjects of the next two chapters.

FOOTNOTES

1. The provisions of the Lateran Council of 1215 are printed by C.H. Hefele, H. Leclercq, Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux (Paris, 1913), V. 2, 1323-1395, see esp. Canons I-III, 1323-1333. For a detailed discussion of the Council and Innocent III's policy concerning the religious life of the period see M. Maccarone, "Il IV Concilio Lateranense", Divinitas, V (1961), 270-298 and "Riforma e sviluppo della vita religiosa con Innocenzo III", Rivista di storia della chiesa in Italia, XVI (1962), 29-72.
2. For a general introduction to the Mendicant Orders in this period see J. Moorman, A History of the Franciscan Order From its Origins to the Year 1517 (Oxford, 1969), and W.A. Hinnebusch, The History of the Dominican Order (New York, 1965), vol.I.
3. For a summary of this theme see L.K. Little, Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe (London, 1978), 197-217, and for a recent article on Dominican preaching in Florence see D.R. Lesnick, "Dominican Preaching and the Creation of Capitalist Ideology in Late-Medieval Florence", Memorie Dominicane, n.s. VIII-IX (1977-78), 199-247.
4. See table on following page.

FOOTNOTE 4 Confraternities active in Florence, according to meeting-place, 1340-60 and 1440-60

<u>Mendicant orders</u>	<u>1340-60</u>		<u>1440-60</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%
L	6	19.3	6	6.1
D	6	19.3	23	23.5
F	-	-	2	2
C	-	-	4	4.1
T	1	3.2	5	5.1
O	-	-	-	-
Total	13	41.9	40	40.8
<u>Other orders</u>				
L	2	6.5	1	1
D	1	3.2	12	12.2
F	-	-	1	1
C	-	-	-	-
T	-	-	3	3.1
O	-	-	1	1
Total	3	9.7	18	18.4
<u>Parish</u>				
L	2	6.5	3	3.1
D	2	6.5	7	7.1
F	-	-	2	2
C	1	3.2	-	-
T	-	-	-	-
O	-	-	1	1
Total	5	16.1	13	13.3
<u>Canonical churches</u>				
L	2	6.5	2	2
D	-	-	1	1
F	-	-	-	-
C	-	-	-	-
T	-	-	1	1
O	-	-	2	2
Total	2	6.5	6	6.1
<u>Hospitals</u>				
L	-	-	-	-
D	2	6.5	3	3.1
F	-	-	1	1
C	-	-	-	-
T	2	6.5	1	1
O	-	-	2	2
Total	4	12.9	7	7.1
<u>Own oratories</u>				
L	-	-	-	-
D	-	-	3	3.1
F	-	-	2	2
C	4	12.9	5	5.1
T	-	-	2	2
O	-	-	-	1
Total	4	12.9	13	13.3
<u>TOTAL</u>	31	100	98	100

CCDE: L = Laudesi C = Charitable
 D = Flagellant T = Trade
 F = Fanciulli O = Unidentified

5. On the Penitents see : G.G. Meersseman, Dossier de l'Ordre de la Penitence au XIIIe siecle (Friburg, 1961), "Disciplinati e penitenti nel duecento", Il movimento, 43-72, and Ordo fraternitatis, I, 265-450. For the Societies of Faith see Meersseman, Ordo fraternitatis, II, 754-775.
6. A. Benvenuti-Papi, "I frati della penitenza nella società fiorentina del Due-Trecento", I Frati Penitenti di San Francesco nella Società del Due e Trecento, ed. M. D'Alatri (Rome, 1977), 191-192. On the Florentine Penitents see also Meersseman, Ordo fraternitatis, I, 365-70, 384-386.
7. On both these hospitals see J. Newton, "Poverty and Charity in Late-Medieval Florence", Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, 1983. L. Passerini, Storia degli stabilimenti di beneficenza e d'istruzione elementare gratuita della città di Firenze (Florence, 1853) still remains the only general history of these institutions. On S. Paolo see also R.A. Goldthwaite, W.R. Rearick, "Michelozzo and the Ospedale di S. Paolo in Florence", Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz, XXI (1977), 221-306.
8. See the Statute drawn up in 1284 for the Florentine Penitents: Meersseman, Ordo fraternitatis, I, cap. VII, 397; cap. XII, 398.
9. Meersseman, Ordo fraternitatis, II, 766-767. See also S. Orlandi, "Il VII centenario della Predicazione di S. Pietro Martire a Firenze (1245-1945)", Memorie Domenicane, n.s. XXI (1946), 71-77.
10. Meersseman, Ordo fraternitatis, II, 768-769.
11. Ibid., 767. The 1584 statute of the laudesi company in S. Maria del Carmine recorded that it, too, was founded to aid the Inquisition: "et si chiamò di stendardo perchè gl' huomeni e donne che di quella erano andando segnati con una croce bianca et rossa in sula spalla destra, seguivano ogni volta che occorreva il bisogno lo stendardo della sacrosanta Inquisitione in aiuto della sacrosanta Chiesa ad enstirpatione degl'heretici et heresie, che all'hora erano et pulullavano in questa città di Firenze." (Acquisti e doni 44, f 5v.)
12. See Appendix I, n. 130.
13. J. Henderson, "The Flagellant Movement and Flagellant Confraternities in Central Italy, 1260-1400", Studies in Church History, XV (1978), 148-149.
14. Ibid., and Chapter 3.
15. R. Morghen, "Ranieri Fasani e il movimento dei disciplinati del 1260", Il Movimento, 40.

16. Annales S. Justinae Patavini, MGHSS XIX, 180; R. Davidsohn, Storia di Firenze, trans. G.D. Klein (Florence, 1972), II, 742
17. P.L. Melloni, "Topografia, diffusione e aspetti delle confraternite dei disciplinati, Risultati, 22.
18. For example, L. Mehus, Dell'origine, progresso, abusi e riforma delle confraternite laicali, 125-134; Monti, Le confraternite medioevali, I, 292; Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 55-56. M.D. Papi, in his article, "Confraternite ed ordini mendicanti a Firenze", 725-727, also suggests a connection between confraternity foundations and the changes of regimes in thirteenth and fourteenth century Florence.
19. M. Meiss, Painting in Florence and Siena After the Black Death. The Arts, Religion and Society in the Mid-Fourteenth Century (New York and London, 1973 ed.), 80-81.
20. J. Chiffolleau, La comptabilité de l'au-delà, 285-86.
21. For a list of plagues see L. Del Panta, Le epidemie nella storia demografica italiana (secoli XIV-XIX), (Turin, 1980), 118; on the Florentine economy in the fifteenth century see R.A. Goldthwaite, The Building of Renaissance Florence. An Economic and Social History (Baltimore and London, 1980), 29-30 and the subsequent sections of Chapter 1.
22. The following companies were founded at the time of the Bianchi movement: see Appendix I, nn. 25-28, 50, 51, 58(?), 84, 86, 93, 109.
23. In contrast sixteenth century statutes tended to wax eloquent about their origins. However, these accounts, which were written at least 200 years after the event they are describing, may be no more reliable than the hypotheses of modern historians. See, for example, the prologue to the 1573 statutes of the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino in S. Maria Novella: "Essendo la Città di Firenze in molti travagli cagionati dalla guerra di Castruccio, dalla venuta del Bavero, et del Re Giovanni di Boemia, et da altre infinite guerre. Et ultimamente afflitta dallo spaventevole et horrendo diluvio venuto a dì IIIII di Novembre MCCCXXXIII, spaventati gli huomini di essa, tentando l'ira di Dio per gli loro peccati, grandemente si commossero e rivolte a Dio le menti loro, cercarono con la penitenza, et con le altre opere buone di placarlo, et infra gli altri furono alcuni, i quali per separarsi in certo modo, et a' certi tempi dalle cose del mondo, e darsi al servizio di Dio si ritirarono dietro alla chiesa di S. Maria Novella, e de' lor' proprii danari edificarono la Capella di S. Simone e S. Taddeo, hoggi detta del Pellegrino. E quivi a dì primo di Gennaio MCCCXXXIII si cominciarono a' ragunare..." (Cap. CRS, 502, ff 1r-v).
24. See Introduction to Chapter 3.

25. C.C. Calzolari deals with them briefly in "S. Antonino e le 'Buche'", S. Antonino, V (1958), 9-11, and Weissman examines one in detail, the compagnia di S. Paolo in Ritual Brotherhood, 107-161.
26. Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 64 n.72, points out that there was often considerable overlap between the ages of older members of fanciulli societies and the younger members of so-called "adult" companies.
27. The traditional nature of their activities can be appreciated from the statutes of the compagnia di S. Giovanni Evangelista of 1427 (BNF Magl. XXXI.II) and the 1444 statutes of the compagnia di S. Zanobi della Purificazione di S. Zanobi (BNF, Magl. VIII.1500.II). However, the most famous of their functions was the presentation of sacre rappresentazioni: Trexler, "Ritual in Florence", 223-232, and A. D'Ancona, Origini del teatro italiano (Florence, 1891), I, 401-11.

It should be pointed out, however, that these companies were not unique in presenting these sacred plays. See Chapter 2 section 1(iii) on the laudesi company in S. Maria del Carmine.

28. Listed by O. Kristeller, "Lay religious traditions and Florentine Platonism", Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters (Rome, 1956), 105 n.17; Giovanni Nesi's sermon for Holy Thursday is discussed by Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 103-105. See also R. Hatfield, "The Compagnia de' Magi", 128-135, and O.Z. Pugliese, "Two sermons by Giovanni Nesi and the language of spirituality in late fifteenth century Florence", Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance, XLII (1980), 641-656.
29. See Chapter 8 for a discussion of charity in the fifteenth century.
30. For what follows see the discussion in Chapter 8, section 3.
31. Trexler, Public Life, 413-13. See, for example, the 1454 statutes of the compagnia di S. Andrea dei purgatori e cardatori: Cap. CRS 854.
32. Goldthwaite, The Building, 243-44.
33. All numbers refer to companies listed in Appendix 1:

<u>1240-60</u>	
L:	1, 99, 130, 148
C:	29, 117
<u>1340-60</u>	
L:	1, 59, 62, 97, 98, 99, 102, 103, 130, 137, 140, 148, 155
F:	15, 21, 57, 60, 61, 64, 83, 119, 121
C:	29, 52, 82, 94, 117
T:	85, 89, 125
O:	78, 92, 129

L: 1, 59, 62, 97, 98, 99, 101, 102, 130, 137, 148, 155
 F: 3, 5, 11, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 30, 34, 48, 50, 51, 56, 58,
 60, 61, 64, 67, 70, 71, 74, 75, 78, 81, 83, 84, 86, 105, 106,
 107, 110, 114, 118, 119, 122, 123, 126, 128, 139, 142, 143,
 145, 146, 153, 156
 B: 6, 9, 10, 16, 31, 69, 115, 120, 131
 C: 29, 32, 52, 97, 117
 T: 4, 13, 36, 43, 47, 54, 76, 80, 85, 89, 125, 144
 O: 12, 33, 44, 45, 46, 87, 90, 91, 108, 113, 151

34. Discussed by Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 173-181.
35. One confraternity which is conspicuous for its absence was the Misericordia, especially as its services had been expanded considerably in the 1520s in order to help plague victims: U. Morini, Documenti inediti o poco noti per la storia della Misericordia di Firenze (1240-1525), (Florence, 1940), XIX-XX, La Misericordia di Firenze attraverso i secoli, ed. C. Torricelli, M. Lopes Pegna, M. Danti, O. Checcucci, 68-71.
36. Benedetto Varchi, writing at the time of the census also uses the same term: Storia Fiorentina di Benedetto Varchi, ed. L. Arbib (Florence, 1838-41), II, 98-99: "Sono in Firenze settantatre ragunanze chiamate compagnie... Quelle degli uomini sono di quattro maniere, perciocchè alcune si chiamano compagnie di stendardo, e queste attendono più tosto a rallegrare se ed altrui, che al culto divino, le quali sono quattordici". See also Hatfield, "The Compagnia de' Magi", 121-22 for a discussion of the term.
37. See Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion. Appendix 2 (a) contains the list of confraternities which S. Antonino authorised to appear in the procession on the feastday of St. John the Baptist in 1454.
38. Copy in Diplomatico di S. Maria Novella, 29.iii.1329, and discussed further in Chapter 9.
39. The subject of Chapter 6.
40. Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 164-81.
41. For example the 1294 statutes of the compagnia della Madonna d'Or S. Michele were followed by the approval of the Florentine bishop (S. La Sorsa, La compagnia d'Or S. Michele, ovvero una pagina della beneficenza in Toscana nel secolo XIV (Trani, 1902), 190-91), compared with the 1284 statutes of the compagnia di S. Gilio and the 1324 statutes of the compagnia di S. Zanobi (respectively: A. Schiaffini, Testi fiorentini del duecento e dei primi del trecento (Florence, 1926), 34-43, and CRS 2170.1, ff 3r-10r).
42. C. Eubel, Hierarchia Catholica Medii Aevi (Regensburg, 1898), I, 260-61 lists the bishops of Florence in the fourteenth century.
43. Martin V stayed in Florence from 1419 to 1420 and Eugenius IV from 1434 to 1436 and 1439 to 1443: L. von Pastor, Storia dei papi dalla fine del medio evo, trans. A. Mercati (Rome, 1958), I, 196-98, 300, 307 n.8.

44. Examples of statutes approved by Corsini include: compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino in 1422: BNF, Magl. VIII.1282, f 84r; compagnia di S. Pier Martire in 1432: Not. Antecos. M345 (1400-55), ff 99v-100v; compagnia di S. Lorenzo: in 1425: Not. Antecos. F507 (1423-27), ff 29r-30r; compagnia di S. Zanobi in 1427 : CRS 2170, f 31v; compagnia di S. Giovanni Evangelista in 1427: BNF Magl. XXXI.II, ff 8v-9r.

45. Pastor, Storia dei papi, I, 356, mentions Eugenius's efforts to reform the Church, but bases his comments only on Vespasiano da Bisticci's Life of Eugenius. On Antonino's measures see S. Orlandi, S. Antonino, Arcivescovo di Firenze (Florence, 1959), I, 75-89.

46. For summaries of his policy towards confraternities see Orlandi, S. Antonino, II, 211-14; E. Sanesi, La vita di San Antonino Arcivescovo di Firenze (Florence, 1940), 97-100; R. Morçay, S. Antonin, Fondateur du Couvent de Saint Marc, Archevêque de Florence 1389-1459, (Paris, 1914), 156-159.

47. R.C. Trexler, "The Episcopal Constitutions of Antoninus of Florence", Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienisch en Archiven und Bibliotheken, LIV (1979), cap. VI, 258.

48. The following statutes are examples of those which he approved: compagnia di S. Giovanni Scalzo in 1456 (printed by G. Richa, Notizie istoriche, VII, 199-200), compagnia di S. Giovanni Battista tra le arcore in 1447 (printed by Orlandi, S. Antonino, I, 187-88), compagnia della Purificazione in 1448 (printed by Morçay, S. Antonin, 473-474), compagnia di S. Maria della Neve in 1447 (Cap. CRS, 606, f 50v).

49. Trexler, "The Episcopal Constitutions", cap.I, 256.

50. Antonino was the correttore of the compagnia di S. Jeronimo: Archivio della compagnia di S. Jeronimo, "catalogo dei pontefici, cardinali, santi, beati, e venerabili santi di questo santo luogo". The organisation of the fanciulli companies took place between 31.iii.1453 and 3.vi.1453 and the record is printed by Orlandi, S. Antonino, II, 313-14.

CHAPTER 2

THE LAUDESİ COMPANIES

The majority of laudesi companies in Florence were founded between 1240 and 1300¹⁾. As we have seen, this type of confraternity was connected closely with the spread of the Mendicant Orders²⁾. Both the company members and the friars benefitted from this association: the former were provided with an oratory in which to meet, and the latter obtained the nucleus of a permanent congregation which might have also contributed towards the construction of the church³⁾. Moreover, confraternities helped to promote the cult of saints who had belonged to the Orders. The laudesi company in S. Maria Novella, for example, was dedicated to St. Peter Martyr, who was one of the most prominent of the early Dominican saints⁴⁾.

The friars also assumed the role of spiritual directors of confraternities and helped to draft their statutes. These rules not only outlined a member's duties, but the way in which he was able to participate in church services. This role was particularly significant in the mid-thirteenth-century, given the tendency to emphasize the importance of the priest to the exclusion of the laity. Altars, for example, were normally sited at the East end rather than in the middle of the church and the celebrant conducted Mass with his back to the congregation⁵⁾. Furthermore in Italian Mendicant churches the friars and the laity were separated by large choir-screens⁶⁾. Although the Dominicans created small openings so that the people were able to "greet" the Host⁷⁾, the screens could be up to 4.5 metres in height, so that nobody could see properly the priest as he celebrated Mass⁸⁾. One advantage of being part of a male confraternity was that members were allowed to pass into the choir itself and some company chapels were even sited on the friars' side of the screen⁹⁾.

It is especially within the liturgical context that one can begin to understand why confraternities should have become so popular.

Laymen now had a chance to be involved actively in the recently revised liturgy, which the Franciscans and Dominicans had done so much to diffuse¹⁰⁾.

1 The services of laudesi companies

(i) The evening services

The feature which distinguished the laudesi company from other types of confraternity was the daily service each evening. But very few surviving records give any idea about what actually happened at these meetings except for the singing of lauds¹¹⁾. One statute which is slightly more informative than most was compiled in 1324 for the compagnia di S. Zanobi of S. Reparata¹²⁾:

tucti quelli di questa compagnia si debbiano ogni sera
raunare nella chiesa predecta a cantare alchune laude
cum Ave Maria ad honore di Dio e della Nostra Donna.

Members had to come each evening to the company's chapel after the last office of the day had been concluded¹³⁾. The ceremony would not have lasted long because it was modelled on Compline. Evidently the normal psalms were either supplemented or replaced by lauds, which were followed by prayers for absent members. Significantly the Ave Maria was also included, which indicates the confraternity's role as a populariser of devotional recitations¹⁴⁾. The service was concluded by the priest with a general confession, following the example of the superior of a monastery at the end of Compline¹⁵⁾.

The ceremony's main appeal must have been the involvement of members in all stages of its enactment, from electing the priest who officiated at Mass to singing the lauds in the vernacular. Moreover the service was more personal compared with the Masses conducted at the High Altar. Instead of taking place among the public, it was in the company's own chapel, which was decorated

with familiar devotional objects. The oratory was often frescoed and contained candle-sticks, lecterns, books of lauds and altar-frontals, which were gifts from past members¹⁶⁾.

The crowning glory of any laudesi chapel was the altarpiece of the Virgin Mary, which formed the centre of the company's devotion. The three best known Florentine examples are the Rucellai Madonna by Duccio, which was commissioned in 1285 by the compagnia di S. Pier Martire, and the two pictures of the Madonna belonging to the laudesi of Or S. Michele¹⁷⁾. In each picture Mary is represented in the same pose. She is seated in a richly worked throne with the Christ child in her arms and surrounded by a throng of angels. Indeed two themes meet in each scene: the humanity of Mary as the Mother of God and her heavenly dignity.

These features were echoed in the lauds sung by the members each evening in front of the altarpiece¹⁸⁾:

Benedicta sie tu madre di Dio vivente	O gloriosa donna.
Che portasti lo prezzo della gente	O gloriosa donna.
Benedicta sie tu stella matutina	O gloriosa donna.
Che portasti la nostra luce divina.	O gloriosa donna.

This laud, which is from the laudario of the compagnia di S. Gilio of S. Egidio, demonstrates the intimacy of the members' relationship with Mary, whom they always addressed with the familiar "Tu" form. She was the company's protector and acted on behalf of the members as an intermediary with Christ, the distant figure represented on the crucifix at the high altar.

The verse above also tells us something about the performance of lauds. Each line was divided into a strophe and a response, suggesting the presence of two groups of singers. The statutes confirm this, for the members with the best voices led the other brothers, who intoned simple responses such as "O gloriosa donna". These respective roles were emphasized by the position of the groups

in the oratory: the soloists assembled around the lectern near the altarpiece, while the rest of the company remained kneeling in the body of the oratory¹⁹⁾. Special singers, who at this stage were probably only members, trained the singers in a weekly school and chose the lauds which were to be sung each evening²⁰⁾. Later in the fourteenth century professionals were employed to sing the lauds, first at festivals and then every evening²¹⁾.

I (ii) The monthly meeting

Laudesi companies also held a more elaborate service on one Sunday of the month. One of the main features of these ceremonies was a procession²²⁾, as can be seen in the 1326 statutes of the compagnia di S. Zanobi²³⁾:

Tucti quelli della predecta compagnia nella prima domenica di ciascuno mese da mactina in quella ora che ssi dicono le messe si debbiano raunare nella predecta chiesa di Santa Reparata. E lli regitori debbiano si procurare colli signori della predecta chiesa che in honore della Beata Vergine Madonna Santa Maria in quella mactina si debbia celebrare messa solennemente. Et dopo lo guagnelio che ssi canterà a quella messa li regitori facciano raunare nel chiostro o dove loro piacerà, quelli della compagnia predecta i quali in quella mactina vi saranno venuti.... li camarlinghi debbiano dare a ciaschuno di loro una candela. Et facto questo li regitori li facciano ordinare a due a due et inanzi a tucti si mettano due giovani della compagnia predecta, i quali portano due grandi ceri accesi. Et apresso di coloro che porteranno i decti ceri mettano alquanti che comincino a cantare alcuna lauda. Et dipoi tucti siano così ordinati a due a due... vadino colle decte candele in mano accese a processione cantando e rispondendo quella laude che lli cantori dinanzi cominceranno. Et vadano per la predecta chiesa procedendo infino di sopra in coro et ivi offerino le decte candele all'altare. Et facta la decta offerta debbiano tucti stare e dimorare ivi divotamente infino a tanto che quella messa sia conpiuta di celebrare od al meno infino a tanto che'l corpo del nostro signore Gieso Cristo sia levato nell'altare.

The passage is of particular interest because it gives a good idea of how members participated and of the way the meeting

fitted within the service of S. Reparata itself. The confratelli arrived at the church at about 9 o'clock in the morning for the beginning of Mass²⁴⁾. They remained with the rest of the congregation until the Gospel had been sung and during the sermon left the nave to assemble in the cloister²⁵⁾. After the homily was over the procession set off for the choir, slowly winding its way through the church. When they reached the high altar the candles were given to the priest during the offertory²⁶⁾ and the singers stopped their chant²⁷⁾. The procedure at this point departed from normal practice, for instead of all the laity returning to the nave, members remained standing in the choir until Mass had been celebrated or at least until the Elevation²⁸⁾.

The procession was as vital a part of the laity's ceremony as it was of the Canons'. The monthly meeting was based closely on the official liturgy. Using the framework of the Mass, the confraternity placed the offertory procession before the prayers leading up to the consecration of the Host. The only difference from the ordinary service was that laymen took the place of clergy; the laudesi substituted for the choristers, who normally sang the offertory chant²⁹⁾. This symbolised the way in which confraternity members transformed their function from spectators into participants.

I (iii) Festivals

The involvement of the laity in services can also be seen within the context of confraternity festivals. Curiously, though, statutes are less informative about the form taken by these ceremonies in the Trecento than the daily or monthly meetings, so that after a brief survey of the fourteenth-century material we shall pass to the Quattrocento where the documentation is more rich.

Most laudesi companies shared much the same liturgical calendar by virtue of being part of the Florentine church. They had many festivals in common, including not just the obvious ones such as Christmas, Easter, the Ascension and Pentecost, but also saints who were venerated locally : St. John the Baptist, St. Lawrence and St. Zanobius³⁰⁾. On these days the normal evening meetings were extended to include vigils and the singing of special lauds to the saint of the day³¹⁾.

A convenient way of ascertaining the relative importance of particular feastdays in the life of a company is by studying a laudario in which all the lauds sung throughout the year were recorded. For example, the laudario of the compagnia di S. Gilio lists 108 lauds arranged in hierarchical fashion and addressed to Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Apostles, Holy Martyrs, Confessors and Virgins. It is significant that 34 were dedicated to Christ, 10 of which were laude della Passione, which were reserved for the period leading up to and including Easter, and that 20 were in praise of Mary, while the rest were split almost evenly among the other saints³²⁾.

Even though laudesi companies shared a common liturgy, each group had special patron saints whose festivals formed the highpoints of the year. One of these was always the Virgin Mary and the other was the saint from whom the company took its name³³⁾. As far as one can tell from the Trecento statutes, the ceremonies appear to have been a more elaborate version of the monthly meetings already described. The Mass supplied the framework and the three main elements were the procession, offertory, and sermon³⁴⁾. One distinctive feature of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century festivals of two laudesi companies in Florence was the inclusion of a wax figure representing their patrons³⁵⁾. This cero was carried in the offertory procession between the reading of the Gospel and the preface to the consecration, and then displayed in the company's chapel³⁶⁾. But it is also probable that these figures were taken around the neighbourhood in order to justify the considerable expenses of their manufacture³⁷⁾. For example, the laudesi company of S. Maria Novella is supposed to have carried the cero of St.

Peter Martyr to the nearby Croce al Trebbio, where the inquisitor had had a confrontation with the Patarines³⁸⁾.

The laudesi companies which did not produce wax figures had other devotional objects, which formed the central points of their processions. The compagnia di S. Zanobi, for example, owned a banner with S. Zanobi depicted on one side and on the other the Annunciate Mary "ornato di drapelloni e di frangia"³⁹⁾. The same group also possessed what a late-fourteenth century inventory described as "una stella d'oro"⁴⁰⁾, which was attached to a canopy and hung in the middle of the church opposite the laudesi chapel⁴¹⁾. Other laudesi companies are known to have owned similar stelle⁴²⁾, but their function is not entirely clear. They were possibly displayed at Epiphany to represent the star, which led the Magi to Jesus, but this seems unlikely given the nature of the company's devotion⁴³⁾. More feasible is the association with Mary suggested by the laud from the late fourteenth century laudario of the compagnia di S. Gilio⁴⁴⁾:

Altissima stella lucente
di noi sempre ti sia a mente
Stella chiara matutina
che risplendi più che dia
sovrogna altra se regina
Madre di Dio onnipotente

The stella was probably a large illuminated star-shaped frame with Mary's image at the centre and accompanied by painted cherubims and seraphims⁴⁵⁾. It may have been, as at S. Croce, a feature of the Assumption Day celebrations, and was raised during the vigil on the previous evening.

The possession of objects such as the star suggests that in the late fourteenth century a greater emphasis was placed on the elaborateness of festivals. This is partly confirmed by the multiplication

in the number of devotional objects owned by laudesi companies⁴⁶⁾, by the creation of a special master of ceremonies known as the festaiuolo⁴⁷⁾, and the employment of a series of professional musicians and singers. At the same time Florentine confraternities came to participate more fully in the religious life of the city, partly no doubt in response to the Signoria's new policy of welcoming visiting temporal and spiritual lords which provided new opportunities for magnificent entries⁴⁸⁾. But foreign dignitaries did not provide the only reasons for public processions. Local festivals, of which the most important was that of St. John the Baptist, were regular features of Florentine civic life. A new chapter of the 1427 statutes of the compagnia di S. Zanobi, for example, indicates the procedure to follow on these occasions. The company was to carry a banner and their most precious of possessions, the head of S. Zanobi in a golden reliquary⁴⁹⁾. Then in the following decade the same group went to some expense in order to construct a float for the procession of 24 June. Four figures took part in the tableau: S. Zanobi and three angels⁵⁰⁾.

While many laudesi companies made their festivals more splendid by employing musicians and making floats, some went even further by mounting sacre rappresentazioni⁵¹⁾. We do not know how many laudesi companies were involved, especially as most historians have tended to emphasize the predominance of the fanciulli societies. Evidently, though, two of the best-known fifteenth century plays were performed by the laudesi: the Ascension of Christ at S. Maria del Carmine and the Annunciation of Mary at S. Spirito⁵²⁾. Whether this type of company also presented the sacre rappresentazioni at S. Felice in Piazza and SS. Annunziata cannot be determined until more research has been done⁵³⁾.

The role of these sacred plays was, as with the singing of lauds, to inspire devotion in the participants and spectators. One of the main differences between performing lauds and plays was that instead of confining the audience to members of the company, the general public was admitted to view the spectacle. The most detailed

contemporary description of the plays was written by a visiting Russian bishop, Abraham of Souzdal, who attended the Council of Florence in 1439. We shall concentrate on the Ascensione di Cristo in S. Maria del Carmine, since detailed records survive for the compagnia di S. Agnese which performed the play.

The immediate reaction of contemporaries to the play was wonder at the ingenuity of the mechanism employed to raise people towards the roof of the church. Bishop Abraham found it difficult to do justice to its marvels: "è impossibile farlo bene, tanto era meraviglioso ed inesprimibile"⁵⁴). Another spectator was a Florentine, Paolo di Matteo Pietribuoni, who has left a short description of the first performance of the Ascension play at the Carmine in 1422:

Giovedì a dì 21 maggio 1422 il dì dell'Assentione e lla
vi(gi)lia. dinanzi si fecie una solenne e bella festa
al Charmino nella chiesa e andò uno huomo vivo invece
di Misser Domenedio in cielo. Et fu tirato dalle volte
insino al palchetto et rasente il tetto per llo diritto.
E tutti atti e similitudine si fecie invicie della
Nostra Donna e di Santa Maria Maddalena e di dodici
apostoli, la quale festa fu tenuta bella e di molti
engegni e intorno alla nughola che quando la nughola
viene in giù e vecie Cristo in su acchozzandosi
insieme s'acciende molti chandele. E così altri
similitudine d'angioli come sarà noto a chi vederà⁵⁵).
la detta festa se ad Dio piacerà lascialla seguire.

Significantly Pietribuoni uses the words "solenne e bella" indicating that these plays were not merely impressive spectacles, but that they excited religious devotion, an aspect only too easy to forget when viewed from the perspective of twentieth century theatrical or artistic history. We should also note that the play was put on twice. The first was on the previous evening during the laudesi company's vigil and would probably have served as a dress-rehearsal before the smaller audience of the membership.

Reading Pietribuoni's description in conjunction with Bishop Abraham's one can reconstruct the movements of the actors. The choir-screen,

which normally formed a barrier between clergy and laity, here provided the stage. On one side was a tower representing Jerusalem and on the other a hill or Mount Olive. The initial action was based around these two sites, for Christ first went into Jerusalem to fetch both His mother and Mary Magdalene and then the twelve Apostles. Once assembled they accompanied Him to the foot of Mount Olive where He prepared for His ascent. At this point the elaborate machinery noticed by Pietribuoni was brought into action. After bidding farewell to His followers, Christ ascended into heaven in an illuminated cloud to join His Father, who was already suspended in the sky surrounded by angelic boys singing and playing instruments⁵⁶⁾.

All surviving accounts of these plays were written by members of the public, so that we know nothing about their effect on the life of the confraternity. Presumably, though, the very action of opening its doors to a wider audience must have begun to alter the company's more self-contained and private way of life. These performances also brought tangible benefits in the shape of Government subsidies, although one should not ignore the corollary that communal funds must have led to closer official supervision.

The necessity for outside help can be seen in the following table, which compares the sums spent by the compagnia di S. Agnese on festivals with the company's total annual expenditure:

TABLE 2.1 Expenditure of the compagnia di S. Agnese, 1425-1450
(in Lire di piccioli)

	Festivals		Total	
	L.	%	L.	%
1425	108	61	177	100
1430	46	22.2	207	100
1435	86	40.8	211	100
1440	70	12.8	548	100
1445	213	19.4	1097	100
1450	109	52.4	208	100

(Sources: CRS I, 24.xi-xii; 98; 99)

The amount paid out for the festival depended on how much apparatus had to be renewed. In 1425, for example, Lire 108 was spent, which represented 61 percent of the company's annual income. Normally when a confraternity made an expensive purchase, the captains asked for contributions from the members. This may have worked for the first time the play was mounted, but it could not be repeated every year. One solution was to petition the Government for a subsidy, which was awarded to the captains in the form of income from the gate gabelle. First granted in 1435 for a ten-year period, the sum was renewed as a result of further petitions⁵⁷⁾. The average received from the gabelle was Lire 117, which normally covered the expenses, except in the case of a complete renovation of all the equipment⁵⁸⁾.

It should be pointed out, however, that the Medicean government was not entirely disinterested, because these plays formed part of the entertainment for visiting dignitaries. The Council of Florence in 1439 was the first such occasion, followed by the visits of the Duke of Milan in 1471 and the ambassador of the King of Spain in 1486⁵⁹⁾. But once established Ascension plays did not end with the expulsion of the Medici in 1494. Companies in S. Maria del Carmine, S. Spirito, and S. Felice in Piazza continued to mount spectacles for many of the large State celebrations throughout the sixteenth century⁶⁰⁾.

Public festivals were, then, the climax of a process which dated from the mid-Duecento when members of lay companies had begun to sing lauds in the vernacular. Over the following 250 years performance was gradually taken over by professionals, who were among the first to introduce polyphony into Florentine musical circles⁶¹⁾.

These developments in the musical and festive life of Florentine confraternities are the aspects which are usually emphasized by historians. However, it should not be forgotten that these activities were only part of a company's life. One of the best ways of

assessing their relative importance is by looking at the evolution of confraternity finances between the early Trecento and the late Quattrocento.

2. Laudesi company finances in the Trecento and Quattrocento

The following laudesi companies have been chosen to illustrate three different levels of wealth: the compagnia di S. Pier Martire of S. Maria Novella, the compagnia di S. Zanobi of the Duomo, and the compagnia di S. Frediano. (See the following page.)

TABLE 2.2(a) Income and expenditure of compagnia di S. Peter Martire 1312-1401 (in lire di piccioli)

Date		Income		Expenditure																				
		Commem. Services		Laudest		Other Salaries		Festivals		Max Oil		Charity		Building		Hells		Misc.		Total		Balance		
		L.	\$	L.	\$	L.	\$	L.	\$	L.	\$	L.	\$	L.	\$	L.	\$	L.	\$	L.	\$			
1312-31		128		10	8.2	4	3.3	-	-	11	9.1	70	57.9	20	16.5	-	-	-	-	6	5	121	100	7
1322-23		277		122	46.2	0.75	0.3	2	0.8	27	10.2	101	38.3	4	1.5	-	-	3	1.2	4	1.5	263	100	14
1332-33		237		113	49.3	1	0.4	0.25	0.1	7	3	88	38.4	0.5	0.2	-	-	17	7.4	2	0.9	229	100	8
1340-41		7		201	21.3	-	-	10	1	7	0.7	53	5.6	7	0.7	-	-	580	61.5	85	9	943	100	-
1390-91		2106		1219	68.3	38	2.1	23	1.3	5	0.3	65	3.6	41	2.3	102	5.7	-	-	292	16.4	1785	100	321
1400-01		1792		786	73.5	27	2.5	11	1	2	0.2	69	6.4	38	3.6	-	-	110	10.3	27	2.5	1072	100	720

(Source: Conv. R.S. 102.291, 294)

TABLE 2.2(b) Income and expenditure of the compagnia di S. Zanol, 1333-1383 (in lire di piccioli)

Date	Income	Expenditure														Total	Balance				
		Total Income	Commen. Oblig.	Laudesi	Other Salaries	Festivals	Wax & Oil	Charity	Building	Helfs	Misc.	Total									
		L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$							
1333-4	136	4	4.1	-	-	5	5.1	3	31	38	38.7	15	15.3	10	10.2	-	23	23.5	98	100	38
1343-4	63	-	-	-	-	4	6.2	5	7.7	35	53.8	16	24.6	1	1.5	-	4	6.2	65	100	2
1382-3	-	6	2.3	-	-	17	6.4	5	1.9	221	83.7	15	5.7	-	-	-	-	-	264	100	-

(Source: CRS 2182 . 36.)

TABLE 2.2(c) Expenditure of the compagnia di S. Frediano, 1365-1405 (in lire di piccioli)

Date	Expenditure														Balance			
	Commun. Oblig.	Laurest	Other Salaries	Festivals	Max & Oil	Charity	Building	Helrs	Misc.	Total								
	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$	L. \$						
1365	7	13.5	-	-	20	38.5	24	46.2	-	-	0.9	1.8	52	100	-			
1375	0.6	1.9	-	2	6.3	6	18.8	5	15.7	-	-	16	50	32	100			
1385	0.6	1.8	-	6	18.2	2	6.2	17	51.6	7	21.2	-	-	33	100			
1395	0.6	3.1	-	1	6	4	20.4	12	61.2	-	-	-	2	10.3	19.6			
1405	12	25	-	0.35	0.7	3	6.2	12	24.8	19	39.3	-	-	2	4	48.35	100	-

(Source: CRS 5.30)

The growth of income and expenditure during the fourteenth century can be related closely to the first company's inheritance. As we shall see in Chapter 4, the confraternity's main source of income was in the form of rent from property, which was used almost entirely to pay for commemorative masses and meals. The multiplication of these services, however, meant that eventually the company was dominated by the fulfillment of testamentary obligations. Members therefore gradually became less involved in the life of the company, as professional singers and musicians were employed to perform the lauds and testators even came to underwrite the expenses of festivals. Without the necessity for members either to pay dues or attend daily services, the compagnia di S. Pier Martire came to be oriented increasingly towards providing a service for the dead rather than the living⁶²⁾.

Although fewer account books survive for the second and third companies, Table 2 gives us a general impression about their development over the Trecento. The expenditure of the compagnia di S. Zanobi almost tripled between 1333 and 1383, while the compagnia di S. Frediano's dropped in the second half of the century. The main reason for the rise in the first was the steady increase in the amount spent on wax and oil, from 38.7 to 83.7 percent of the company's budget. This can be explained both by the growing splendour of the festivals and the multiplication in the number of commemorative services for testators⁶³⁾.

While the laudesi companies of St. Peter Martyr and S. Zanobi shared a fairly similar financial development, the compagnia di S. Frediano followed a different pattern. Founded at least fifty years after the majority of laudesi companies, its role was split equally between devotional and charitable activities⁶⁴⁾.

During the two decades before the Black Death the members of the compagnia di S. Frediano had concentrated most of their energy on subsidising the poor and burying the dead.⁶⁵⁾ After 1348 the company buried fewer people, but continued to give charity to local parishioners⁶⁶⁾.

We do not know if there was any connection between this development and the reduction in total expenditure from 1375 to 1395. It seems curious that the company's income-remembering that the entrata and uscita were normally linked closely-and charity should have dropped in exactly the period that living conditions deteriorated⁶⁷⁾, and suggests that the company was going through a period of change. In these years the confraternity began to resemble more closely other laudesi companies, spending a higher proportion of its income on devotional activities.

Poor relief reminds us that we should not divorce these figures from their social and economic context. The increase, for example, of the compagnia di S. Pier Martire's income in 1340-41 can be linked, as we shall see in the case of Or S. Michele⁶⁸⁾, to receipts from bequests during the plague outbreak of that year. Furthermore the overall rise in expenditure in the second half of the Trecento of both these companies and S. Zanobi should be examined against the contemporary feelings of "fear, guilt and sorrow"⁶⁹⁾, and be related to the fact that many people had more money to spend after the Black Death.

Our brief discussion of these account books suggests the difficulties inherent in generalising about the developments of Florentine laudesi companies from fragmentary records. Yet while each of these three confraternities moved in slightly different directions during the Trecento, by the early Quattrocento they had all come to share some important features not only with each other, but also the other laudesi societies of the city. The Catasto provides the opportunity to extend our enquiry to include nine laudesi companies in 1427-29:

TABLE 2.3 Capitalised tax returns of laudesi companies appearing in the Catasto of 1427-29
(rounded to the nearest fiorino a oro)

COMPANY	OSM	SPM	SZ	SA	SG	SS	SF	SL	SM
TOTAL INCOME	14,947	11,363	2146	593	358	286	124	124	42
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>									
Commem. serv. %	1252 7.4	8524 67.3	809 57	476 67.1	51 22	149 36.1	68 50	12 5	- -
Laudesi %	1756 10.3	71 0.6	182 13	- -	107 45	36 20.9	42 30	- -	- -
Other salaries %	7721 45.4	1178 9.3	213 15	- -	- -	- -	7 5	- -	- -
Festivals %	214 1.2	- -	85 6	44 6.2	35 15	114 27.7	- -	- -	- -
Wax & oil %	1947 11.4	2207 17.4	- -	114 16.1	42 18	30 7.3	21 15	- -	- -
Charity %	299 1.8	42 0.3	131 9	50 7.1	- -	5 1.2	- -	- -	- -
Building %	2571 15.1	- -	- -	- -	- -	28 6.8	- -	213 89	- -
Heirs %	1258 7.4	570 5	- -	25 3.5	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -
Misc. %	- -	71 0.6	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	15 6	- -
Total %	17,018 100	12,663 ⁺ 100	1420 100	709 100	238 100	412 100	138 100	240 ⁺ 100	- ⁺ -
BALANCE	(2071)	(1300)	726	(132)	120	(116)	(14)	(116)	-

Figures in brackets are debits.

* Initials refer to following: SPM = compagnia di S. Pier Martire; SZ = compagnia di S. Zanobi;
SA = compagnia di S. Agnese; SS = compagnia di S. Spirito;
SG = compagnia di S. Gillo; SF = compagnia di S. Frediano;
SL = compagnia di S. Lorenzo; SM = compagnia di S. Marco.

+ The value of the following items is not given:

For SPM: "Anno a mantenere le chase di Firenze e di chontado";

"A frati di S. Maria Novella per uno rinoval de' due anni": Catasto 293, f 34r.

For SL: "uno rinoval in perpetuo per l'anima di Jachopo di ser Tone".

"uno rinoval per l'anima de' morti della Chonpagnia": Catasto 293, f 28v.

For SM: "uno rinoval il dì di Santa Maria per l'anima di Cholui lasciò loro la sopradetta terra".

"Anchora anno a fare dire le laude in San Marcho": Catasto 293, f 30r.

Sources: Catasto '194, 291, 293, CRS 6.1, f 29r.

These laudesi societies can be divided into four levels: two had capital exceeding 10,000 florins, one between 5000 to 1000 florins, another between 1000 and 500 florins, and five below 500 florins. The relative wealth of these companies reflected the extent of their activities. The largest, Or S. Michele, was a charitable organisation which, as we shall see in subsequent chapters⁷⁰⁾, had a very substantial budget, while the smallest was a laudesi confraternity which met in S. Marco. But the property which formed the basis of these groups' assets⁷¹⁾, did not produce sufficient income to keep them out of debt, although it should be noted that none of these returns included membership dues which traditionally underwrote many of the normal running expenses.

The reasons for the insolvency of laudesi companies are linked partly to a drop in income and partly to increased expenditure. Insufficient information is available in the Catasto to explain why these confraternities should have had a deficit, although we shall see in Chapter 4 that some were effected by a drop in rent from their country property, while others had found difficulty in collecting debts⁷²⁾.

Expenditure, on the other hand, can be examined in more detail, bearing in mind that virtually all items in these tax returns were capitalised at 7 percent⁷³⁾. To trace the fortunes of the three companies which we have already discussed, we must take 7 percent of their 1427 returns and convert them into Lire⁷⁴⁾. The figures in Table 3 accentuate the trends already observed. The compagnia di S. Pier Martire's expenditure was Lire 3546 compared with Lire 2217 in 1390-91; the compagnia di S. Zanobi spent Lire 398 in 1427 as opposed to Lire 264 in 1382-83 and the compagnia di S. Frediano's expenditure was Lire 39 compared with Lire 48 in 1405. The budget of the first two companies, therefore, continued to expand, while the third contracted further.

The largest expense of all three companies was commemorative masses for the dead⁷⁵⁾. But their own services were also important, and, as they employed more singers to "conserve the devotion"⁷⁶⁾, a

greater proportion of their budgets came to be spent on professional singers or musicians. Thus 45 percent of the annual income of one of the smallest groups, the compagnia di S. Gilio, was given to the laudesi. The employment of outsiders with specialised skills was a feature of all these confraternities. The largest ones, such as Or S. Michele, had a staff of thirty-six, who received 55.7 percent of the annual expenditure.

The figures in Tables 2 and 3 mirror the changes we have observed when comparing the statutes from the fourteenth with those of the fifteenth century. They also enable us to trace the growth or decline of particular activities in the lives of individual companies. Thus, while the celebration of festivals of the compagnia di S. Zanobi and the compagnia di S. Agnese⁷⁷⁾ both assumed greater importance, expenditure on these days in 1427 only represented 6 percent of their budgets. Significantly, though, the latter spent a higher percentage of its income on charity than did the famous Or S. Michele.

None of the subsequent fifteenth-century Catasti give as much detail about the finances of confraternities as that of 1427-29. Although periodically the State made attempts to update its records of the property acquired by religious corporations⁷⁸⁾, no thorough-going survey was carried out for another fifty years. However, only six Florentine companies appeared in the 1478 Catasto⁷⁹⁾ and each tax return contained slightly different information. The three laudesi companies in S. Maria Novella, the Cathedral and S. Frediano listed their property, but only the first two included all their expenses; the third only provided details about expenditure relating to legacies. The following table summarises these returns- which it should be noted were not capitalised- and also includes the budget of the compagnia di S. Agnese:

TABLE 2.4 Income and expenditure of four laudesi companies in 1478
(in Lire di piccioli: not capitalised)

Company INCOME						EXPENDITURE														
TOTAL		Common. Services		Laudesi		Other salaries		Festivals		Wax & Oil		Charity		Buildings		Misc.		Total		Balance
	L.	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.
STM	9478	8035	82	224	2	525	5	159	2	391	4	463	5	-	-	-	-	9837	100	(359)
SZ	2244	1215	18	430	8	400	8	171	3	286	9	256	5	2857	51	-	-	5643	100	(3371)
SA	113	5	4	23	20	18	16	20	18	2	2	39	35	-	-	6	5	113	100	0
SF	289	20	7	-	-	172	58	20		-	-	81	27	-	-	6	2	300	100	(11)

Source: Catasto 989, ff 261r-v, 468r-469r, 670r-679v; CRS I (compagnia di S. Agnese). 100, ff 143r-145v.

The three confraternities which had submitted tax returns were in debt, while the compagnia di S. Agnese had balanced its books exactly. The reasons for the state of each company's finances stemmed partly from individual circumstances and partly from other factors , which effected the evolution of all property-owning companies in the Quattrocento.

In the case of the compagnia di S. Pier Martire the captains had reduced its indebtedness by selling life-tenancies in some of its properties⁸⁰⁾, while the compagnia di S. Zanobi had turned a profit into a loss by spending more than the annual income on building an oratory⁸¹⁾.

The compagnia di S. Agnese, on the other hand, had managed to offset the largest expense, the performance of the Ascensione di Cristo,

by obtaining a substantial grant from the Commune⁸²⁾. The compagnia di S. Frediano was also in debt, but had increased its income tenfold by receiving a number of bequests⁸³⁾.

But a whole series of more general influences were also in operation. The deliberative records of the compagnia di S. Zanobi complained in 1478 of the effect of recent epidemics, exceptionally bad weather and communal taxation⁸⁴⁾. All this had reduced the company to a state of "disordine et rovina", which meant the interruption of business and the loss of income. Only fourteen years later the captains of the compagnia di S. Agnese were using similar terms to describe their organisation, which had become insolvent because of the difficulties encountered by their predecessors in collecting debts⁸⁵⁾. Yet another factor which contributed towards the decline of these companies was the Government's policy. From 1419 onwards a series of provisions were passed to ban confraternities and exclude from membership those eligible for the three highest offices⁸⁶⁾. Obviously even a temporary suspension meant a loss of continuity in their relations with tenants, who took the opportunity to avoid payment of rent, and a disruption of all activities.

The financial difficulties of these confraternities therefore reflected a deeper malaise which stemmed from a combination of external political and economic factors with the inactivity of officials and membership. While there may not have been an absolute decline of laudesi companies in the last half of the fifteenth century, their growth was undoubtedly less vital than the flagellants, which form the subject of the next chapter.

FOOTNOTES

1. See Chapter 1, Table 1.
2. By 1263 laudesi companies had been established in each quarter of the city: in the churches of SS. Annunziata, S. Croce, S. Maria Novella and S. Maria del Carmine. Cf Appendix I, nn. 137, 148, 130, 2. See Chapter 1, n.4.
3. The laudesi group in S. Maria Novella was founded in 1244 and the church's choir begun in 1246-79; the laudesi of SS. Annunziata was founded in 1263 and the church enlarged from 1254-1304; the laudesi of S. Maria del Carmine dates from 1249 and the church was founded in 1268. For foundation of companies see Appendix I nn. 137, 2. and for churches Paatz, Die Kirchen, III, 680-86; I, 71-73; III, 188.
4. St. Peter Martyr founded the company in 1244: see the 1447 statutes: "beato et glorioso sancto Piero Martire inventore et principiatore di questa venerabile et devota compagnia della Vergine Maria della chiesa di Sancta Maria Novella di Firenze". (Conv.R.S. 102.324, f 1r). The laudesi in S. Maria del Carmine was dedicated to S. Agnese since one of the feet of the saint had been given to the church when the foundation stone was laid in 1268. S. Agnese's foot was kept in a reliquary on the company's altar: G. Bacchi, "La compagnia di S. Maria delle Laudi e di S. Agnese nel Carmine di Firenze", Rivista Storica Carmelitana, II (1930), 143, and Davidsohn, Storia, VII, 115. The laudesi of S. Reparata also helped to promote the relic of its patron, S. Zanobi, who was buried in the crypt and whose head became the centrepiece of the company's altar: Davidsohn, Storia, VII, 115, and the company's 1427 statutes: CRS 2170.1, cap. XXV, f 53v: "Et che e detti processioni si proveggia di fare il nostro istendardo il quale portiamo sempre sopra la gloriosa testa di Sancto Zenobio".
5. The Study of Liturgy, eds. C. Jones, G. Wainwright, E. Yarnold, (London, 1978), 237-38 and J.A. Jungmann, The Mass of the Roman Rite, Its Origins and Development (Missarum Sollemnia), trans. F.A. Brunner (London, 1959), 182-83.
6. For Florence see the studies of M.E. Hall, "The Ponte in S. Maria Novella: the problem of the rood screen in Italy", JWCI, XXXVII (1974), 157-73. and "The Tramezzo in Santa Croce, Florence, Reconstructed", Art Bulletin, LVI (1974), 325-41,

- and Renovation and Counter-Reformation. Vasari and Duke Cosimo in S. Maria Novella and S. Croce, 1565-1577 (Oxford, 1979).
7. Acta Generalia 1249: Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica (Louvain, Paris and Rome, 1896) III, 47.
In C.1210 the Bishop of Paris had introduced a new regulation, which became widely diffused, that the priest should elevate the Host after the words of consecration. The laity timed their arrival at church to coincide with the Elevation: Jungmann, The Mass of the Roman Rite, 90-91.
 8. The Tramezzo of S. Maria Novella was this height: Hall, "The Ponte in S. Maria Novella", 163.
 9. In S. Croce the laudesi company met beside the sacristy and in S. Maria Novella the compagnia di S. Pier Martire in the Bardi chapel until 1335: Hall, Renovation, 157, 197, and John White, Duccio, Tuscan Art and the Medieval Workshop (London, 1979), 33.
 10. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 introduced more uniformity into devotional practice (Canon IX, De diversis ritibus in eadem fide: C.H. Hefèle, H. Leclercq, Histoire des Conciles V.2, 1339-1340) by the revision of the liturgical books and the emergence of the ordinary, breviary and missal. See E. Cattaneo, Il culto cristiano in occidente. Note Storiche (Rome, 1978), 270-81. Dominicans like Humbert of Romans also drew up service books which were adopted throughout his Order: Humbert of Romans, Ordinarium iuxta vitam sacri ordinis fratrum praedicatorum, ed. F.M. Guerrini (Rome, 1921).
 11. On the evolution of the singing of lauds see F.A. D'Accone, "Le compagnie dei laudesi in Firenze durante l'Ars Nova", L'Ars Nova del Trecento (Certaldo, 1970), 253-280, and "Alcune Note sulle Compagnie Fiorentine dei Laudesi durante il Quattrocento", Rivista Italiana di Musicologia, X (1975), 86-114, as well as the forthcoming book by Cyrilla Barr. In the meantime see her fundamental study: "Lauda singing and the tradition of the disciplinati Mandato: a reconstruction of two texts of the office of Tenebrae", L'Ars Nova Italiana del Trecento (Certaldo, 1978), 21-44.
 12. 1324 statutes of the compagnia di S. Zanobi in CRS 2170.1, cap. VI-VII, f 4v and the 1427 statutes in Ibid., cap. XVI, ff 45r-v. References to the daily singing of laude appear in: the 1284 statutes of the compagnia di S. Gilio: Testi fiorentini del duecento e dei primi del trecento, ed. A. Schiaffini (Florence, 1926), cap. XVII, XIX, 37, XXVI, 39, and the company's

- late fourteenth-century statutes in *Ibid.*, cap. II, 44-45; the 1280-1298 Ordinances of the compagnia di S. Agnese in Testi fiorentini, ed. Schiaffini, cap. LXVIII, 72; the 1333 statutes of Or S. Michele: BLF Ashburnham 1660, cap. XIV, f 10r; the 1447 statutes of the compagnia di S. Pier Martire: Conv. R.S. 102.324, cap. VIII, f 4v. Curiously, though, evening services are not mentioned in the following: the 1324 statutes of the compagnia di S. Frediano: BNF Palatino 154, or the 1485 statutes of the laudesi of S. Croce: BRF, MS 2535.
13. S. Zanobi (1324), cap. VII, f 4v. In common with many other companies, it met in the crypt or "sotto le volte": *ibid.*, f 11v. See Paatz, Die Kirchen von Florenz, III, 391. Meersseman, Ordo, 95, also discussed these evening services.
 14. E. Delaruelle, P. Ouillac, E.R. Labande, Storia della chiesa, dalle origini ai nostri giorni, trans. G. Alberigo (Turin, 1971), XIV.2, 977.
 15. S. Zanobi (1324), cap. VII, f 4v. See also Meersseman, Ordo, 953.
 16. For example, the laudesi of S. Maria Novella met until 1335 in the Bardi Chapel, which was frescoed by followers of Cimabue: White, Duccio, 37. See also: S. Orlandi, "La Madonna di Duccio di Boninsegna e il suo culto in S. Maria Novella", Memorie Domenicane, n.s. XXXII (1956), 205-17. An early fifteenth-century altarpiece belonging to the compagnia di S. Zanobi is in Galleria Nazionale, Parma, room XXII, no. 54. Discussed by G. Poggi, "La tavola di San Zanobi nella chiesa di Santa Reparata", Rivista d'Arte, V (1907), 112-17. The contents of the compagnia di S. Zanobi's chapel can be reconstructed from S. Zanobi (1324) cap. VII, f 4v and an inventory of 1383: CRS 2176.13, ff 44v-46r.
 17. The first is in the Uffizi and is discussed by John White, Duccio, 33-36; the others are in Pian di Mugnone, Oratorio di S. Maria Maddalena and Or S. Michele itself. See N.R. Fabbri, N. Rutenburg, "The tabernacle of Orsanmichele in context", The Art Bulletin, LXIII (1981), 388-89.
 18. BNF 11.1.212, f 28v: "Lauda della Vergine Maria".
 19. S. Gilio (1284), cap. XVII, XIX: 37, cap. XXV: 39; compagnia di S. Agnese: S. Agnese (1280-98), cap. LXVIII, 72.
 20. S. Agnese (1280-98), cap. LXVIII, 72.
 21. See D'Accone, "Le compagnie dei laudesi in Firenze", 253-280.

22. See the laudesi companies in: S. Maria del Carmine: S. Agnese (1280-1298), cap. XXVI, 60; S. Egidio: S. Gilio (1284), cap. XVIII, 37, XXXVI, 41; Or S. Michele: OSM (1333), cap. XIX, f 11v; S. Reparata: S. Zanobi (1324) cap. IV, f 4r; S. Frediano (1324), cap. X, f 3r.
23. S. Zanobi (1324), cap. IV, ff 3v-4r.
24. Mass was always begun at the third hour: Jungmann, The Mass of the Roman Rite, 177.
25. The sermon followed the Gospel: Jungmann, The Mass of the Roman Rite, 289.
26. Jungmann, The Mass of the Roman Rite, 88.
27. Ibid., 326.
28. Ibid., 88-92.
29. S. Zanobi (1324), cap. IV, ff 3v-4r; Jungmann, The Mass, 326-29.
30. See, for example, the laudesi company in S. Egidio: S. Gilio (1284), cap. XXVII, 39-40; S. Maria del Carmine: S. Agnese (1280-98), cap. XLII, 64; S. Reparata: S. Zanobi (1324), cap. VIII, f 4v; Or S. Michele: OSM (1333), cap. XXIX, f 14v.
31. The compagnia di S. Gilio distinguished between two types of vigil: a mano and a ferro. The former were more important and the captains formed a circle around the altarpiece of the Virgin Mary and held lit candles for the duration of the vigil, while at the latter candles were burned in their ordinary candle-sticks: S. Gilio (1284), cap. XXVII, 39-40: "Dele vigilie quali si facciano a mano e quali al ferro". See also the service at Or S. Michele: described by the rubric: "Come si fare luminaria alle laude": OSM (1333), cap. XXIX, f 14v.
32. The Laudario is in BNF 11.1.212. A list of the titles of the lauds appears in Ibid., ff 7r-8v. Another Florentine Laudario is in BNF 11.1.122, and is analysed in Chapter 2 of Cyrilla Barr's forthcoming book on the musical performance of medieval Italian lauds. I am grateful to Professor Barr for allowing me to read a draft of the manuscript.

33. See the following companies: S. Agnese (1280-98), cap. LVIII, 67. S. Gilio (1284), cap. I, 34 and (L c.14th), cap. II, 44-45. S. Pier Martire: records for expenses are in account book of 1312-1341: Conv.R.S. 102.292; see also SPM (1447), cap. IX, f 5v; S. Zanobi (1324), cap. XXVIII, ff 9r-v.
34. Rather vague indications appear in the statutes listed in n.l. See also a Marian company of Pisa: Meersseman, Ordo, II, 1051.
35. The compagnia di S. Gilio and the compagnia di S. Pier Martire.
36. S. Gilio (1284), cap. II, 34: "Et questi capitani debbiano procurare si che si faccia uno cero buono e orrevole, lo quale si debbia offerere per Sancta Maria di febbraio, nostra festa principale, e basti questo cero di ffino al'ottava di Sancta Maria di settembre". The Ceri presented by Florence's subject cities were displayed for up to a year in the Baptistry: G. Dati, Istoria di Firenze, ed. L. Pratesi (Florence, 1904), 87.
37. The expenses were large in comparison to the company's annual budget, as can be seen in the 1312-41 account books: Conv.R.S. 102.292. Considerable care was taken about making these ceri for they were first moulded from wax and then the visible parts of the body-face, hands and feet+ were painted in flesh-tones. Mary was given a cloak of buckram, a veil and a crown of silk, while St. Peter Martyr wore a white surplice and black cloak and held a banner to symbolise his position as leader of the army of the faithful against heresy. The parallels with the Ceri of the subject states are obvious. They were described by Gregorio Dati as "fatti di legname, di carta, e di cera con oro e con colori e con figure rilivate": Istoria di Firenze, 92.
38. V. Fineschi, Memorie istoriche degli Uomini illustri del convento di S. Maria Novella, Firenze (Florence, 1790), xxxviii-xxxviii. The custom was probably not initiated before 1338 when the cross was erected: S. Orlandi, "Il VII centenario della predicazione di S. Pietro Martire a Firenze (1245-1945)", Memorie Domenicane, LXIV, N.S., XXII, (1947), 42-45.
39. CRS 2170.4, f 22r. The banner was normally preserved in a tabernacle and was hung up above the altar of S. Zanobi eight days before a festival: S. Zanobi (1427), cap. XXIV, f 52v. On less important feastdays the tabernacle was merely opened and a lamp lit in front of it.
40. CRS 2176.13, f 45r: "Una istella d'oro con 21 ventuno

iscudi [e una] tavola dell'arme dell'Arti".

41. Ibid.: "uno chanape conche è neapicchata la detta istella" (inventory dated 8.v.1383). See also CRS 2170.4, f 23r.
42. Laudesi company in S. Croce: F. Moise, S. Croce, (Florence, 1845), 420-21; laudesi company in S. Maria del Carmine: "Item prestare a frati del Carmine per la festa del Beato Andrea...la stella nostra cogli angioli": CRS (compagnia di S. Agnese), 1.4, f 33v on 4.vii.1490.
43. Cf the star used by the compagnia de' Magi in the fifteenth century: Hatfield, "The compagnia de' Magi", 108.
44. BNF Magl. 11.1.212, f 30r: "Lauda dela Vergine Maria".
45. CRS 2171.C, f 22r: "A Anbruogio di Baldese e Smeraldo di Giovanni dipintori a dì XXVII di maggio [1403] per parte di paghamento di facitura de' cherubini e serafini e compassi della stella nuova della compagnia: Lire 9 e soldi 2". For the star belonging to the laudesi di S. Croce see the company's 1485 statutes in BRF, Ricca MS 2535, cap. I, f 21r: "E più vogliamo che lla vigilia della Ascensione di Nostra Donna si pongha la stella acciesa nel mezzo della chiesa e chantisi le laude in detta sera, chom'era di buona usanza anticha...". See also F. Moise, S. Croce (Florence, 1845), 420-21, where he mentions the star with an "immagine di Maria nel centro".
46. Compare, for example, two earlier fourteenth-century inventories of the compagnia di S. Zanobi (CRS 2182.36, ff 169r-v; CRS 2170.4, ff 21r-22v) with that of 1383 (CRS 2176.13, ff 44v-46r) and 1394 (CRS 2170.4, ff 23r-24r).
47. S. Zanobi (1427), cap. XXIII, ff 51r-52r. Cf Trexler, Public Life, 247, 509.
48. S. Zanobi (1427), cap. XXIII, ff 51r-52r. See also F.A. D'Accone, "Alcune note sulle compagnie fiorentine dei laudesi durante il Quattrocento", 86-114, for a survey of this development.
49. The head was placed in this reliquary in 1331: G. Villani, X, 168. Cf S. Zanobi (1427), cap. XXV, f 53v.
50. CRS 2181.33, f 163v: "E deono dare infino a dì 27 d'Ottobre 1435 Lire 67-8s-2d piccioli per....[la] festa nel'anno 1435 e per la processione di San Giovanni...Sono L10-12s-8d per legname per la barella di San Zanobi e L 12-4s-6d per ferramenti per lo [e]dificio della barella e...9s per tre

paia d'alie per gli angoli..." Also the same year:
 "E...xx di giugno Lire 2... a tronbetti ch'achonpagnono
 la testa di San Zanobi per la processione...": Ibid.,
 f 149r. On the S. Giovanni celebrations see P. Gori,
Le feste fiorentine attraverso i secoli. Le feste per
 San Giovanni (Florence, 1926) and most recently Trexler,
Public Life, 240-78, and especially 252-56.

51. On Florence see: A. d'Ancona, Origini del teatro italiano (Turin, 1891 ed.), I, 245-76, 401 ff; V. de Bartholomaeis, Le origini della poesia drammatica italiana (Bologna, 1924), 443-60. R.C. Trexler, "Ritual in Florence: Adolescence and salvation in the renaissance", 228-30; R.C. Trexler, Public Life, 374-75.
52. For the compagnia di S. Agnese see below, and for the compagnia di S. Spirito see CRS (compagnia di S. Spirito) 6.60, ff 16v-17r. For historians' views see works cited in n. 51.
53. For SS. Annunziata see the description of Bishop Abraham of Souzdal in D'Ancona, 246-250, in which the Bishop mentions the participation of "molti fanciulli", who would have belonged to the compagnia di S. Michele Arcangelo. (Founded in 1420: see Appendix I, n.115). The play at S. Felice in Piazza is described by Vasari in his Life of Il Cecca in Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, ed. G. Milanesi, (Florence, 1906), III, 196-99. The only known confraternity in the church was that of the Laudesi della Nostra Donna e S. Silvestro: Appendix I, n. 140. For a list of the performances of these plays in Florence see Il luogo teatrale a Firenze, eds. M. Fabbri, E. Garbero Zorzi, A.M. Petrioli Tofani (Florence, 1975), appendix).
54. D'Ancona, Origini del teatro italiano, I, 250.
55. BNF Conventi Soppressi C.4. 895, f 107r. Published by G. Pochat, "Brunelleschi and the Ascension of 1422", The Art Bulletin, LX (1978), 233.
56. See also D'Ancona, Origini del teatro italiano, I, 251-53.
57. Provv. Reg. 126, ff 195v-196r: 28.viii.1435; 156, ff 255v-256r: 13.xii.1465 also referring to a petition of ten years earlier.
58. Records of the company's receipts from the Commune: in CRS 1.115, ff 31v-33r..
59. 1439: D'Ancona, Origini del teatro italiano, I, 250; 1471: S. Ammirato, Istorie fiorentine, ed. F. Ranalli (Florence, 1848), V, 189-90; 1486: CRS 1.4, f 10r: "spese nella festa

dell'Ascensione di Nostra Donna proxime passato delle 100 lire che lui [their syndic] hebbe dal comune di Firenze per fare decta festa allo imbasciadore del Re di Spagna".

60. For example in 1533, the visit of Margaret of Austria; 1565 the marriage of Joan of Austria to Francesco de' Medici; 1586, the marriage of Virginia de' Medici to Cesare d'Este: See: F. Decroisette, "Les Médicis et la fête de l'Annonciation à Florence", Culture et religion en Espagne et en Italie aux XVe et XVIe siècles, (Abbeville, 1980), 11-41, esp. 17-18. I have not traced any performances between 1486 and 1533.
61. F.A. D'Accone, "Alcune note sulle compagnie fiorentine", 88.
62. See Chapter 4, section 2(ii).
63. Table 2(b) does not reflect this development properly, because the compagnia di S. Zanobi's account books do not allow one to separate the purchase of wax and oil for vigils as opposed to the company's ordinary services.
64. Founded in 1324. Cf Appendix I, n.59. See Introduction to Chapter 5.
65. Cf the company's Registro de'morti for 1337-84: CRS (compagnia di S. Frediano) 5.125.
66. Information on people given charity is found in CRS 5.30 and is most complete for 1362-72.
67. There was a recession from 1370-78 (C. De La Roncière, "La condition des salariés à Florence au XIVE siècle", Il Tumulto dei Ciompi. Un momento di storia fiorentina ed europea (Florence, 1981), 26), but the worst years in the second half of the fourteenth century were 1384-93. (G. Pinto, "I livelli di vita dei salariati cittadini nel periodo successivo al tumulto dei Ciompi (1380-1430)", Il Tumulto dei Ciompi, 181.)
68. See Chapters 4 and 5.
69. M. Meiss, Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death, 80.
70. See Chapters 5-7.
71. All these companies declared that they owned property. For example, the return of the compagnia dei laudesi di S. Lorenzo: "E tra di possessioni e chase..": Catasto 293, f 28v.
72. The compagnia di S. Spirito complained that "E de vero che

sempre sta in debito per troppe spese e per male risquotere le pigione di catuni pagatori": CRS 6.1, f 29r.

73. Herlihy, Klapisch, Les Toscans, 65-67, explain that the basis of this system was to enable the Catasto officials to work out the capital value of land from the rent, i.e. rent was equal to 7 percent of the value of the property. Using the same principle, recurring expenses were capitalised, although one-off payments were not.
74. In 1427 one florin was worth 80 soldi! See Catasto 293, f 3lr: "Anno avere da più persone Lire 20...5 fiorini".
75. See Chapter 4 for more information on this subject.
76. S. Zanobi (1427), f 44v: "Dello apparare le laude per conservare la divotione".
77. Evidently the apparatus used in the sacra rappresentazione of the compagnia di S. Agnese was not entirely renewed in 1427. Only Lire 44 was spent: see Table 1.
78. Information about property acquired by confraternities after 1429 are in the Catasto volumes containing "Beni trasferiti in chiese ed altri luoghi pii dello stato fiorentino": Catasto 420 (12.vii.1427 to 30.i.1431): ff 3r, 6r-v: Or S. Michele; S. Pier Martire: f 9r; Bigallo-Misericordia: f 13r; S. Maria della Croce al Tempio: f 5lv. Catasto 425: S. Zanobi, f 3v; f 4r: S. Lorenzo; f 9v: S. Pier Martire; f 9v: S. Gilio, S. Marco Vecchio; f 10r: Nostra Donna, popolo di S. Felice in Piazza, S. Giovanni detto lo scalzo, Innocenti, S. Agnese, S. Pier Gattolino, S. Alberto, S. M. della Croce al Tempio, laudesi di S. Marco, Vergine Maria a Monteloro, S. Francesco, Laudesi di S. Frediano, Or S. Michele; f 10v: Bianchi in S. Agostino, Laudesi di S. Spirito, S. Barnarba e concordia, S. Jeronimo degli Ingesuati. Catasto 686 (12.vii.1427-30.x.1447) f 22v: Vergine Maria in S. Martino; f 25r: Laudesi di S. Spirito; f 33v: Or S. Michele; f 34v: S. Maria nello spedale di S. Lorenzo; f 40r: S. Maria della Croce al Tempio; f 46r: S. Pier Martire; f 58r: S. Francesco; f 79v: Bigallo; f 103r: Fanciulli di S. Maria delle Pietà; f 108v: S. Zanobi. This information is repeated in Bigallo 1677 ("Compre fatte per preti e luoghi religiosi dal 1427 in qua"), but continues up until 1469. More complete tax returns were submitted in 1438 in Catasto 602, but only S. Zanobi and the Bigallo-Misericordia are recorded.: ff 1r-4r, and 5r-12r respectively.
79. Catasto 989.
80. See Chapter 4.
81. Catasto 989, f 469r: "Per murare e ancora a fare murare

che è necessario in tutto tra debito fatto e a fare 200 fiorini". See also CRS 2177.19, f 125r: "E anchora per lo spendio fatto nella muraglia della nostra chonpagnia si per il nostro bisogno e si per quello anno fatto gli operai di S. Maria del Fiore di murare le chase de' chapielani sopra la nostra chonpagnia alle nostre spese...".

82. See section above on laudesi festivals.

83. Cf Chapter 4.

84. CRS 2177.19, f 125r: "Certi buoni huomeni, amatori della nostra chonpagnia, chonsiderato e veduto in quanto disordine et rovina la nostra chonpagnia è venuta da dì primo di maggio 1478, per più rispetti e chagione massime per le infruenze fatte nella città di Firenze e anchora per chagione della moria e della ghuccia fu da dì primo di maggio 1478 insino a oggi dì 26 di dicembre 1479 e si per gravuzzie suteposte dagli uficiali de' preti e per molte altre ragione e chagione che dire si potrebbono". Sources on the plague are summarised by A. Corradi, Annali delle epidemie occorse in Italia dalle prime memorie fino al 1850 (Bologna, 1973 ed.), I, 313-26.

85. CRS (compagnia di S. Agnese) 1.4, ff 46r-v: "Item e prefati capitani decto dì [17.i.1492] considerato quanto la compagnia loro è pel tempo passato ita in disordine e continuamente è apta a andare se non vi si pone qualche conveniente rimedio. Et considerando che lla compagnia predecta ha a riscuotere molti e molti danari et consegnitare più cose immobili che sono della compagnia predecta et porre in saldo più conti di chi ha malmenato la compagnia per tempi passati".

86. Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 165-169 discusses the provisions and their effect. See also Chapters 3 and 9.

CHAPTER 3

The Flagellant Companies

I Introduction

The spread of voluntary flagellation through the foundation of confraternities has been linked by many historians of medieval Italy to the 1260 movement¹⁾. But a spontaneous outburst of religious fervour does not in itself explain why a particular form of religious devotion should have been adopted. It does no more than reflect some of the current themes of contemporary piety²⁾. One of the most important, and relevant to the popularity of lay penitence, was the emphasis on the incarnate life of Christ. It helped to underline the central role of the Mass in Christian devotion, and in particular the significance of the celebration of the Eucharist as a visible re-enactment of the Passion. In time, the recently introduced practice of the elevation of the Host became the main point of the ceremony; the laity timed their arrival at church in order to "greet" the body of the Saviour³⁾.

The Mendicant Orders, as in so many other fields, acted as the main channels for the promotion of these themes. The suffering of Christ became an important topic of Franciscan sermons and was emphasized to induce the friars' audiences to take communion more frequently and to practise penitence⁴⁾. The 1260 movement and the later flagellant companies were also expressions of devotion to Christ, although His role was different in each one. Because the movements often arose as a reaction to various real or prophesied disasters, the emphasis was always upon Christ's anger and therefore the necessity of immediate and violent penitence⁵⁾. In the confraternity, on the other hand, He was seen less as the remote and vengeful deity and more as the Redeemer, who was prepared to suffer crucifixion for the salvation of Mankind. Flagellation was seen as a method through which participants could share in His sufferings and in particular the Passion. This devotion, therefore, became more exclusive, for members whipped themselves in remission of their own sins and to accumulate a common fund of merit for the benefit of members rather than outsiders.

Flagellation was never seen as an end in itself, but always as one of the stages in penance. Giovanni dalle Celle makes this

clear in his Summa de casibus conscientiae: 6)

La penitenza consiste nel piangere i mali passati
e inoltre nel non commettere più atti da deplorare
...Così la vera penitenza ha tre parti: la contrizione
del cuore, la confessione con la bocca e la
soddisfazione per ciò che è dovuto.

Penitence is a three-fold system. It begins with contrition, is followed by confession and ends with satisfaction, which acts as the outward sign of the individual's decision to lead a new life. Normally "satisfaction" was officially imposed by the Church, but in the case of confraternity members the self-mortification of the flesh was voluntary. It should be noted, however, that the central feature of the whole process was confession and sacramental absolution, which could not be administered by anybody other than a priest. Confraternities could therefore never be accused of seeing the taking of the discipline as an end in itself, as happened in the case of the groups of flagellants who were condemned by Clement VI in 1349⁷⁾.

Penance continued to be a popular theme in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries among the clergy and laity alike. The Observants, for example, made it a central element of their programme for reform and renewal⁸⁾. Humanists such as Siculo Polenton and Bartolomeo della Fonte wrote treatises and orations on the sacrament of penance. Della Fonte is particularly relevant to us, because his treatise was designed as a dialogue between himself and Donato Accaiuoli, who was a leading member of the Florentine flagellant compagnia di S. Jeronimo⁹⁾.

The confraternity itself had always been an important centre for sermons¹⁰⁾. Friars had traditionally been employed by the laudesi companies in particular to preach at festivals¹¹⁾. However, in the fifteenth century the members of the compagnie della notte and fanciulli societies tended to deliver orations themselves¹²⁾.

The themes of the few sermons given before these new companies were traditional. Penitence retained a prominent place, especially during the celebrations for Holy Week, as can be seen in the oration delivered by Filippo Carducci to the compagnia de' Magi in 1476¹³⁾:

L'anticha consuetudine di questo sancto giorno et venerando luogo, honorandi padri et dilecti fratelli, è commuovere chon chiare ragioni et calde parole tutte le menti degli auditori alla penitenza de' peccati, sopra tutte l'altre opere necessaria in questa vita al'huomo.

If the confraternity encouraged devotion through requiring members to listen to edifying sermons, it also helped to enforce some of the basic rules of the Catholic Church. While the Church Councils had laid down that the obligatory minimum was annual communion and confession, most confraternity statutes went further. They normally required a member to make confession once a month and to take communion two or three times a year on the company's main feasts¹⁴⁾.

Instructions for leading a pious life did not end there, for statutes prescribed a series of prayers to be recited throughout the day. These prayers were meant to remind the member of some of the central tenets of his faith. For example, when he rose in the morning he was to recite three Pater Nosters and Ave Marias in reverence of the Trinity, seven more during the day in remembrance of the seven hours Christ had suffered on the cross, and another five before retiring to bed in reverence of His five wounds¹⁵⁾.

The emphasis on Christ was an essential part of the flagellants' devotion and hence their insistence that members should attend Mass every day and make sure that they were present at the Elevation¹⁶⁾. But if Christ remained their main inspiration we should not forget that each company was usually dedicated to another saint who acted as their special advocate. Table 1 lists the

TABLE 3.1 Titular saints of flagellant companies meeting in Florence,
1250- 1499

<u>1250-1299</u>	<u>1400-1449</u>
S. Lorenzo	S. Francesco
* S. Giovanni Decollato	S. Giovanni Gualberto
	S. Jeronimo
<u>1300-1349</u>	S. Alberto
* S. Giovanni Battista	S. Paolo
Gesù	S. Spirito
S. Niccolò di Bari	S. Spirito
Gesù Pellegrino	S. Girolamo
	* S. Jacopo
<u>1350-1399</u>	S. Maria delle Nave
S. Bartolomeo	S. Maria Maddalena
S. Niccolò di Bari	
S. Benedetto	<u>1450-1499</u>
S. Filippo	S. Bernardino
S. Zanobi	SS. Annunziata
S. Giovanni Battista lo scalzo	S. Bartolomeo
SS. Innocenti	S. Benedetto
S. Tomaso Aquino	S. Brigida
S. Benedetto	S. Carità
S. Agostino	S. Crocifisso
S. Domenico	S. Felicità
S. Lorenzo	S. Ignatio
* S. Lucia	S. Leonardo
* S. Maria Chiarito	SS. Martiri
S. Maria del Suffragio	S. Natività
S. Michele	* S. Niccolò di Bari
* S. Michele	S. Niccolò da Tolentino
* S. Orsola	* S. Pietro
* S. Pietro	Arcangelo Raffaello
* S. Trinita	S. Sebastiano
	* S. Trinita
	S. Vincenzo Ferrer
	S. Antonio da Padova
	S. Antonio Abbate
	* S. Pietro
	* S. Maria Vergine

* = Confraternities named after titular saint of church where they met.

Source: Appendix I,

titular saints of all the flagellant companies meeting in Florence between 1260 and 1499. There were representatives from almost every spiritual Order and included prophets, apostles, evangelists, Doctors of the Church, monks, levites and holy virgins. Despite this variety, there was a bias towards those saints who were especially associated in their lives with penitence; 42 percent were martyrs. The majority had belonged to the early church and had died while spreading the faith within 200 years of the death of Christ. The most popular martyr was St. John the Baptist, which is hardly surprising in a city that had adopted him as patron. Various aspects of his cult were, however, emphasized by different companies. One group, for example, was dedicated to the beheaded Baptist, while a second to the penitent who had wandered barefoot through the desert¹⁷⁾.

Other companies chose their titular saint because of their association with the church where they met. Fourteen of the sixty flagellant societies appeared in the sources with the same name as their church, although this proportion may be high because of the incompleteness of the records. However, such connections would probably have been fostered by the clergy, since a confraternity was a convenient way of maintaining the popularity of the cult of a particular saint. Thus founders of Orders were venerated: both SS Francis and Dominic as well as S. Giovanni Gualberto, the originator of the Vallombrosans.

But later saints also appeared as confraternity patrons. Thus a company which was dedicated to S. Bernardino of Siena was begun in 1451, only seven years after his death¹⁸⁾, and another dedicated to St. Vincent Ferrer in 1455, the year of his canonisation¹⁹⁾. Yet again the choice of a titular saint may merely reflect his popularity in a particular period. For example, the cult of St. Jerome, who was the patron of two flagellant companies, grew during the fifteenth century as can be appreciated by the multiplication of the number of pictures of him. The subject of these altarpieces was usually St. Jerome in the desert, aimed to lead the viewer to emulate his example and do penance²⁰⁾.

All confraternities owned pictures and they formed the centre-point of their oratories. The scenes which were depicted were often the sufferings of martyrs, rather than scenes of happiness and serenity which normally characterised the alterpieces of the laudesi²¹⁾. Unfortunately no Trecento or Quattrocento pictures have been attributed to Florentine disciplinati companies, although in other cities they are usually distinguished by the inclusion of figures of flagellants²²⁾. In Vecchietta's portrait of S. Bernardino of Siena, for example, the saint is represented preaching in a vaulted room to a congregation, which included a large number of hooded figures carrying whips²³⁾. The latter were probably members of the flagellant compagnia dei Rachomandati a Jesu Cristo Crocifisso, which had an oratory in the basement of the hospital of S. Maria della Scala²⁴⁾.

2 The services of flagellant companies

The para-liturgical ceremonies of flagellant companies appeared to be more similar than those of the laudesi. The sections which follow will be based on a study of a series of statutes belonging to the main disciplinati companies in Florence. It should be pointed out, however, that if one had been able to make a detailed comparison between the liturgy of each company and that of their host institutions some more subtle differences might have emerged²⁵⁾.

The meetings of flagellant companies were normally envisaged in pairs, of either twice every fortnight or two times a month²⁶⁾. On the first occasion members disciplined themselves, and on the second sang orations and were corrected for their misdemeanors. The division underlines the fact that flagellation was regarded as only a stage in the liturgical cycle from the days of suffering to the days of joy: the capture, trial and crucifixion of Christ, to His Resurrection and Ascension²⁷⁾. The same pattern was found in the organisation of their whole calendar, explaining the emphasis on the events leading up to and including Easter Week.

Although there was a basic distinction between these two ceremonies, they also had much in common because they shared a common model. They were both based on the Divine Office: the evening service on Compline and the morning on Mattins²⁸⁾. In order to avoid needless repetition we shall concentrate on the former taking our account from the 1456 statutes of the compagnia di S. Giovanni scalzo²⁹⁾:

E quando al ghovernatore parrà tempo di chominciare l'uficio dato el ciénno chome è di chonsuetudine... inpongha Jube Donne benedicere cholla lezione della chonpieta e fatta la chonfessione gienerale e detta l'orazione di Sancto Raffael si dichino sette salmi penitenziali cholle letanie e orazioni e la Magnificat e diasi la pacie. Di poi si dichi l'orazione di Nostra Donna, di San Giovanni Battista, e della pacie; e detto Benedichamus Domino cholla Salve Regina e orazione, ciaschuno si pongha a sedere e lli sagrestani dieno le discipline. Di poi el ghovernatore faccia uno sermone chonfortando e fratelli ferventemente faccino disciplina. Ispenti e lumi dica el Chapitolo della Passione e Tre Stanze della Passione chon altre devozioni e prieghi, e finito si faccia una gienerale rachomandigia. Di poi ciaschuno si rivesti chantando una lauda e chon silenzio chome parrà al ghovernatore.

The service was made up of a series of orations, psalms and litanies. It began with a greeting to the Virgin Mary and was followed by the general confession and the Oration of St. Raphael. After invoking the intercession of their patron, St. John the Baptist, the Seven Penitential Psalms led the brothers towards the office of flagellation. The governor then delivered a short sermon on penitence to prepare the members for the high point of the service. The candles were now snuffed and the oratory was plunged into darkness. The action had both a dramatic and symbolic meaning for the extinguishing of the lights recalled the darkness, which had fallen on earth at the moment of Christ's crucifixion. The brothers were encouraged to share in His suffering by a series of psalms, outlined in more detail in another statute of the

same period³⁰⁾:

Si spenghino e lumi e dichino la Stanza della Passione. E di poi si dica alquante parole sulla brevità [della vita], exortando e fratelli a ben fare. Poi si tengha silenzio, facendo disciplina per spazio di dire cinque Pater Nostri e Ave Marie. Poi si faccino le prece e quelle facte si dica el psalmo Miserere mei Deus overo De Profundis Clamavi... E di poi si rivesti e facciasì una rachomandigia overamente si chanti psalmi, laude e hymni...

The emphasis was upon the misery and brevity of human life and the necessity to do penance for the good of their own souls. It is instructive to see how the actual office of flagellation was incorporated into the service. Although one might have assumed that the whipping continued throughout, it was evidently confined to a few minutes so that it was symbolic rather than really damaging to the participant. This is confirmed by a contemporary service book belonging to the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino which recorded the office in detail. It was constructed around a series of invocations to the main saints of the Church. They were grouped in blocks of about twenty names which were read out by the governor. The members responded with "Ora pro eis". At the end of each section the brothers took up their whips and beat themselves for the duration of a Pater Noster³¹⁾:

Sancte David	Ora pro eis
Sancte Moyses	Ora pro eis
Sancte Johannes Batista	Ora pro eis
Omnes sancti Patriarce	Ora pro eis
Omnes sancti Prophete	Ora pro eis

PATER NOSTER (With a picture of a whip)

Sancte Petre	Ora pro eis
Sancte Paule	Ora pro eis
Sancte Andree	Ora pro eis
Sancte Jacobe	Ora pro eis

When the litany was complete, the candles were relit and the members dressed themselves and after singing another series of orations they left the oratory.

A number of points have emerged from the foregoing account, which help to place confraternity para-liturgy within a wider context and explain something of its appeal. The importance of this type of flagellant ceremony has been recognised for some time. It was a semi-dramatic stage in the evolution of lay companies' para-liturgy, half way between the Church's liturgical drama of the thirteenth century and the fully fledged sacra rappresentazione³²⁾. It contained dramatic elements, but had not reached the stage when it became separated from its context as an independent performance. In contrast to Perugia, Florentine flagellant companies never did mount plays, leaving this instead to the laudesi and fanciulli confraternities³³⁾.

The above description also indicates the full extent of the laity's involvement in the service, which was put on for and by the members. Even the director of ceremonies, the governatore, was a layman who had much the same function as a priest without, of course, his vital sacramental role. The members themselves went beyond their normal passive state and were able to participate in the ceremony. Finally one should recognise how closely based was their service on the Divine Office, which demonstrates the extent to which the laity adapted the Church's usages and helps to explain the similarity between so many flagellant ceremonies.

2 (ii) The Festivals

The flagellants' liturgical year was not very different from that of the laudesi companies', because they were both based on the liturgy of the Florentine church. In addition to the weekly or fortnightly meetings, members attended services on all the main feastdays associated with Christ, Mary, the Apostles and locally-honoured saints, such as John the Baptist, St. Lawrence,

and St. Zenobius³⁴⁾. Each company also celebrated the festivals of their patron saints, the majority of whom, as we have seen³⁵⁾, were martyrs. The second most popular feast of many flagellants was Marian, which testifies to the strength of her cult even among societies associated principally with Christ. Significantly the Marian festival celebrated most frequently by flagellants was the Purification or Candlemas, which has always been associated with the penitential procession³⁶⁾.

Disciplinati statutes indicate that their festivals, like those of the laudesi companies, became more elaborate in the Quattrocento. While the Trecento statutes simply suggest that ceremonies should be performed as "beautifully and honourably as possible"³⁷⁾, the later descriptions are considerably more detailed³⁸⁾.

Festaiuoli were elected by some companies³⁹⁾, while others refer to cantors⁴⁰⁾, but none employed the professional musicians and singers, who had given the laudesi company festivals their professional gloss and helped to attract the public. This lack of interest in musical performance was in keeping with the nature of the Florentine flagellants' devotion, which, unlike that of the Perugian disciplinati⁴¹⁾, remained very private. When members did leave their oratory to join a procession on a local feastday, members received strict instructions about how to conduct themselves. They were to be dressed in habits with their cowls well down over their faces in order to avoid recognition: "cogli occhi bassi a terra e colla mente a Dio"⁴²⁾.

The development of flagellant ceremonies in the Quattrocento is most obvious in the celebration of Holy Week⁴³⁾. This was the most important period in the year for it reminded the members forcibly that their voluntary discipline was undertaken in commemoration of Christ's crucifixion. They were required to attend services at the company oratory on Holy Thursday as well as Wednesday or Friday evening. On Easter Day, however, they had to take communion in their local parish. In this way the brothers were reminded that being members of a confraternity did not exempt

them from the basic duties to the official church⁴⁴⁾.

Holy Week celebrations began for many companies on Wednesday evening after the office had been completed in the church. It was a simple ceremony, but prepared the members for the days to come by incorporating into their normal evening service both a sermon on penitence⁴⁵⁾ and flagellation. Maundy Thursday was, however, the centre of their devotion, for it included the scene from the Last Supper, when Christ had demonstrated His true humility by debasing himself before His disciples and washing their feet. The following passage from the 1476 statutes of the compagnia di S. Giovanni Battista tra le arcore presents the main elements of the service, which were common to other flagellant companies in Florence⁴⁶⁾:

Ordiniamo che'l Giovedì Sancto alle 17 ore sendo ciascheduno chonfessato e ben disposto con grandissima riverenza e contrittione de' sua peccati si debba venire nel luogo della nostra compagnia. El nostro padre ghovernatore debba avere provveduto che mentre che ssi rauni la brighata che dua de' nostri frategli dichino alquante istanze della Passione di Giesù e quando vi sarà il numero che parrà al ghovernatore e sua consiglieri di cominciare l'ufficio si dica el dì e salmi penitentiali e nel luogo della Gloria Patri si dica Cristus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad mortem. El l'altro choro risponda Mortem autem crucis el ghovernatore dica Respiceque sumus.

E sagrestani abbino ordinato uno chandelliere con 15 chandele e a ogni salmo se ne spengha due e forniti e salmi senza letanie allora si spengha l'ultima e tutti gli altri lumi e chomincisi el Benedictus dominus per dua de' nostri frategli e gli altri rispondino semper benedictus; a ogni 4 versi si faccino le tenebre e fatte le tenebre allora si faccia una divotissima disciplina con parecchi istanze della Passione.

E fatto questo ceremonie quando parrà al nostro padre ghovernatore e vestiti ogni uno si vada intorno a ogni uno chiegghendo perdonanza a ogni uno...E fatto questo el ghovernatore con molta humiltà e riverenza, pigliando exemplo dal nostro signore Yhesu Cristo, lavi e piedi a tutti e frategli e baciandoe piedi a ciascheduno, lui lavi e consiglieri rasciughi... e poi si faccia una reverendissima cholatione...

The service was divided into three parts. The first established the theme, for as members arrived one of them recited some of the verses from the Passion. Although the statutes do not make it clear which verses were selected, they probably chose the passage in Matthew which described Christ's humiliation by the soldiers⁴⁷⁾. Then the office itself was introduced by the penitential psalms, which featured prominently in their regular services. But at this point there was a variation for instead of immediately plunging the members into darkness- called the Tenebrae⁴⁸⁾ - candles were blown out gradually, one at the end of each psalm. Flagellation followed the Benedictus and more verses of the Passion were read. After dressing, each member walked around the oratory asking his brothers' pardon. Preparations were then made for the main feature of the ceremony: the Governor bent down in front of each one and washed and kissed his feet. Afterwards they all sat down to a commemorative meal.

Many of the same elements from their normal office are incorporated into this service. The main difference is the literal re-enactment of the verses from John XIII, 1-16, which described the events at the Last Supper. The passage from the Gospel was read aloud during the ceremony and guided members as they went through their imitation of Christ's actions⁴⁹⁾. Significantly, just as the weekly services were based fairly closely on the Divine Office, so was the one on Holy Thursday. Its originality lay not so much in the form, as in the fact that elements were enacted by laymen. This enabled them to participate in a ceremony which was normally the exclusive domain of the priesthood.

The developments in the flagellant ceremonies between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were not as striking as those of the laudesi companies. Certain elements of the disciplinati's para-liturgy were made more dramatic, but none presented sacre rappresentazioni as had the flagellants in Perugia in the early Trecento⁵⁰⁾. Instead the Florentine groups were characterised by a constant emphasis on keeping alive the original character of their devotion. Indeed in the fifteenth century a new group of flagellant companies⁵¹⁾ emerged called the compagnie della notte, which

practised an even stricter form of devotion⁵²⁾. Their meetings were imbued with an intensely serious attitude and dominated by periods of silence, in which members prayed together and meditated on the Passion of the Saviour. Moreover they spent each Saturday night together in their dormitory. Although straw mattresses were provided for the brothers⁵³⁾, they did not sleep for long because they followed the monastic timetable and were roused at 2.00 or 3.00 a.m. for Mattins, the first office of the day⁵⁴⁾.

One of the striking features of the chapter which outlines this ceremony in the statutes of the compagnia di S. Jeronimo was the constant emphasis on the fines which would be imposed on members who did not fulfill their obligations. The implication behind these statements is that members may not have been especially diligent in attending meetings⁵⁵⁾. In the following section we will examine this problem further.

3 Punishment and attendance

The main sources used so far have been the statutes. These records have enabled us to examine in detail the form of flagellant company ceremonies, but they cannot tell us how far practice deviated from theory. While they may reflect accurately the liturgy, one has to turn to other records to find out how far members conformed to the strict rules of a company. Taking the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino for the fourteenth century and the compagnia di S. Jeronimo for the fifteenth, we shall look first at the type and number of faults committed by members and then at the variation in attendance patterns⁵⁶⁾.

Most confraternities agreed on what constituted bad behaviour⁵⁷⁾. The basic concern was to ensure that members followed the rules laid down in the statutes for the furtherance of their own spiritual health and the maintenance of good order. If they broke a rule they were given admonitory punishments, or expelled for

really bad offences involving "scandalous" behaviour⁵⁸⁾.

The reasons why members were expelled and punished from the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino can be seen in Table 2:

TABLE 3.2 Members expelled from the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino, 1341-1363

Fault	1334-39	1340-49	1350-59	1360-69	Total	
					Nos.	%
No reason	56	17	2	7	82	56.2
Non-attendance		10	13	7	30	20.5
Disobedience		-	11	3	14	9.6
Scandalous behaviour		-	1	1	2	1.4
Joining another company		1	-	1	2	1.4
Giving away secrets		1	-	1	2	1.4
Unresolved quarrels		1	-	3	4	2.7
Failure to do punishments		-	-	3	3	2.1
Usurious practices		1	-	-	1	0.7
Playing dice		1	-	-	1	0.7
Frequenting taverns		3	2		5	3.4
Total	56	35	29	26	146	100

(Source: CRS 910.6, ff 73r-84v; 910.7, ff 1r-77v.)

The highest number of members were expelled in the first five years of the company's existence, 1334-1339⁵⁹⁾. Although no reasons were given it seems probable that after the first flush of enthusiasm some of the first recruits found the discipline too strict. About ten were expelled each year, which represented 16 percent of their total membership of 62 in 1337⁶⁰⁾. Later evidence would seem to confirm that periods of very rapid growth led to high expulsion rates. Thus in both 1341 and 1351 a large

number of men had been told to leave, possibly following the acceptance of a series of unsuitable people, who had been allowed to join after the membership had been decimated by outbreaks of plague in 1340 and 1348-49⁶¹⁾. A few years after the Black Death the company settled down to a less disturbed existence and the numbers expelled gradually levelled off to an average of about four per year. Instead, a large number were simply given admonitory punishments⁶²⁾.

A member could be expelled in two ways, either immediately for an extremely grave infringement of the statutes or as the result of a series of minor offences. Only a few fell into the first category, although it is revealing to see what the company considered to be most disturbing to its status quo. One man was discovered to have practised as a usurer, while a second was already enrolled in another flagellant company. Two others gave away company secrets, while four others had refused to settle a quarrel⁶³⁾. It is fairly obvious why each of these men were expelled since they either introduced immoral practices, disturbed the peace of the company, or contravened the secret and exclusive nature of the group.

Two other men were accused of creating a scandal, a situation which confraternities sought to avoid at all cost. We know little about the faults of the first man, Simone di Naldo spadaio, except that he had disagreed with a decision taken by the captains and had stood up in front of the whole company and told them they had done wrong⁶⁴⁾. What is significant is that his action challenged the unity of the company. The other man expelled, Niccolò di Cecco, was a former captain. His successors found that he had done a number of things while in office without consulting his colleagues. He had, for example, dismissed the frate correttore and made payments to a series of unnamed people⁶⁵⁾. His actions had gone against another of their basic principles, which was shared responsibility and joint decision-making.

A member could also be banished for repeating minor offences more than three times⁶⁶⁾. The most common was non-attendance, (20.5 percent), followed by disobedience of the captains' orders, or the statutes (9.6 percent). More detailed information about petty misdemeanors is found in Table 3:

TABLE 3.3 Members of the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino punished, 1365-69

Fault	No.	%
No reason given	12	5.9
Non-attendance	83	40.7
Missing confession	23	11.3
Disobedience	11	5.4
Scandalous behaviour	1	0.5
Giving away secrets	1	0.5
Failure to do punishments	30	14.7
Playing dice	3	1.5
Frequenting taverns	9	4.4
Swearing	2	1
Not paying subscriptions	11	5.4
Making false accusations	9	4.4
Breaking the silence	7	3.4
Entering oratory outside normal hours	2	1..
Total	204	100.1

(Source: CRS 910.8, ff 3r-27r.)

Evidently a high proportion of the membership fell foul of the officials, since 204 men were punished in just five years. The most numerous faults were the same as those committed by the men who were expelled. 40.7 percent were punished for non-attendance, 11.3 percent for failing to make confession, and 6.9 percent

for crimes of moral laxity: frequenting taverns, swearing and playing dice. But apparently when admonished they did not necessarily follow the instructions, for 14.7 percent were corrected for failing to do penances.

This is not that surprising because some of the punishments were fairly humiliating. For the least serious offences, such as missing confession, the miscreant was simply required to recite a set number of Pater Nosters and Ave Marias, because the damage had been done to his soul rather than to the spiritual health of the company ⁶⁷⁾. If his act had affected the reputation of the whole society, a different kind of punishment was invoked, the aim of which was to dissuade him from repeating his misdemeanor and also warn his colleagues. He was dressed in a black habit-in contrast to the normal white one- to symbolise his state of depravity and made to stand in the middle of the oratory during a service. If he had said something against the company he had to repeat the words to the assembled membership and ask their forgiveness on bended knees while they paraded past him giving him a blow with their whips ⁶⁸⁾.

The last stage before expulsion was to send the miscreant to visit another church during their service. He was dressed in a black habit and instructed to beat himself as he walked. The distance that he went depended on the degree of his fault; the most wicked had to go all the way to S. Miniato al Monte, while the least only as far as Or S. Michele. Members punished in this way had frequented taverns, broken the silence during meetings, and missed the all-important service on Good Friday ⁶⁹⁾.

Passing now to the records of the compagnia di S. Jeronimo we shall see whether the high rate of absenteeism remained a feature of confraternities a century later. The following two tables summarise attendance for 1435, 1445, 1455 and 1465. In the first we have calculated the total number of members who attended meetings in each third of the year. The second examines these four years in more detail by recording the number who were present

TABLE 3.4 Annual attendance record of the compagnia di S. Jeronimo,
1435-65

Period	Attendance		Absentees		Total	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
1435 *	(a)	41	39	64	61	105 100
	(b)	38	36	69	64	107 100
	(c)	34	32	74	68	108 100
1445	(a)	25	19	105	81	130 100
	(b)	20	28	51	72	71 100
	(c)	24	37	41	63	65 100
1455	(a)	59	36	104	64	163 100
	(b)	55	34	105	66	160 100
	(c)	34	25	102	75	136 100
1465	(a)	35	25	106	75	141 100
	(b)	32	24	99	76	131 100
	(c)	26	21	101	79	127 100

* = (a) = January - April; (b) = May - August; (c) = September - December.

(Source: ACJ, Libri della Rassegna, 1432-1444, 1445-1466)

each week. In neither have we been able to separate out the officials and novices from the majority of members. However, since we can take for granted that the attendance of officials and novices was consistently high⁷⁰⁾, the fluctuations should reflect the attendance of the ordinary members.

The first obvious feature of Table 4 is the variation in the size of the membership. There was a tendency for it to increase; the total in the first third of 1435 was 105, while by the same period in 1465 it was 141. But this general movement was interrupted by the interference of governments, which suspended temporarily the activities of confraternities. The law of 1444 can, for example, be seen coming into effect the next year⁷¹⁾. The members who were still on the company's books in January to April 1445 included the veduti who had been forbidden from attending⁷²⁾. This explains the 81 percent absenteeism. When the membership lists were revised at the beginning of May the membership had fallen from 130 to 71. Four months later six more people had been struck off, but absenteeism was now reduced roughly to the level of early 1435 (63 percent).

The prohibition of veduti was, however, enforced for only eight years⁷³⁾, and by the beginning of 1455 the membership had climbed to 163. The reintroduction of the law in June⁷⁴⁾ did not have quite the same effect as in 1445. The total number of names on the company's books was still 136 in the last third of the year, but attendance fell from 34-36 percent to 25 percent. Ten years later only 21-25 percent of members were present at meetings, possibly because the law against the veduti attending confraternities passed by the Parlamento of 1458 had only been lifted the previous year⁷⁵⁾.

Having taken into account the influence of external factors, we can now turn to look at the differences in attendance between

the seasons. With the exception of 1445, the number of people fell slightly as the year progressed. The most popular time for any flagellant company was the period leading up to and including Easter. In 1435, for example, the average attendance rate in the first third of the year was 41 which dropped to 34 towards the end. But turning to Table 7, which plots weekly attendance throughout the year, we see that there could be considerable variation even within each period (see following page).

The statutes of the compagnia di S. Jeronimo stipulate that members should be present at three main events in the first four months: Epiphany, the company's principal feast of the Annunciation, and Holy Thursday. Mass was celebrated at each service and the members listened to a sermon, while the washing of feet also took place on the third day⁷⁶⁾. In 1435 attendance was above average on each occasion, but even so only half the membership of 105 was present on Holy Thursday. Significantly, other days in Lent were equally if not better attended. In the same year at the vigil before the first Sunday of Lent, 52 percent (55) were present, with 50 percent (53) on Palm Sunday. Members therefore seem to have viewed the whole Lenten season as important, rather than emphasizing their own festivals.

In the second period, from May to August, average attendance fell from 39 to 36 percent (see Table 5). There were never more than 44 present and once as few as 27 of a total membership of 107, suggesting that the Summer months were marginally less popular than Lent. The high-points of the period according to the company's statutes, were the feasts of St. Mary Magdalene, celebrated at the oratory in Fiesole, and the Assumption⁷⁷⁾. There were 27 percent (29) at the former and 36 percent (39) at the latter, suggesting again that festivals were not always well supported. In fact more attended Corpus Christi (40 percent (43)) and St. John the Baptist's feastday (37 percent (40)), even though they were not an official part of the company's calendar. Average attendance in the final four months continued to drop slightly to 32 percent of the membership. Numbers fluctuated from week to week with no obvious explanation, except for the feast of St. Jerome, which attracted 42 percent (45) of the members⁷⁸⁾.

In 1445 the Lenten season was best attended; 40 members were at the oratory on the Fourth Sunday. Then, as the company reorganised itself after the exclusion of the veduti, the numbers began to climb again; on 6 November 35 of the possible 65 members came to the oratory.

The patterns of attendance during 1455 and 1465 repeat the two years already discussed, since the first represents a fairly healthy picture and the second displays the effect of another temporary suspension. Membership in 1455 had climbed to 163, almost 100 more than ten years earlier, and attendance was as high as 106 on Holy Thursday. Although the number of names on their books had not dropped significantly by 1465, the attendance had. There were now never more than 21 to 25 percent of members present, explained partly by confusion after the six-year interruption of activities and partly because the veduti were still not allowed to take part⁷⁹⁾.

The records of these two flagellant companies have enabled us to see a little further beyond the formulae of the statutes. We have discovered that members quite frequently failed to obey the basic rules of confraternal life, although usually by omission rather than intent. Attendance could be as low as 19 percent of the total membership, and, in the case of the compagnia di S. Jeronimo at least, never exceeded 65 percent⁸⁰⁾. We will now turn to another way in which one can examine the actual rather than theoretical practices of confraternities.

4 The finances of flagellant companies

In Chapter 2 we saw that developments in the activities of the laudesi companies were often reflected in their account books. Although fewer financial records have survived for the disciplinati, the two companies which furnished details about punishments and attendance have also left us enough information for a very partial analysis of their accounts.

TABLE 3.6 (a) Income and expenditure of the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino:
1345, 1349 and 1415 (In Lire di piccioli)

INCOME		EXPENDITURE																				
		Masses		Salaries		Festivals		Wax		Poor		Building		Heirs		Devotional		Misc.		Total		Balance
			₹		₹		₹		₹	₹			₹		₹		₹		₹		₹	
1345	58	-	-	4	5.4	-	-	24	32.4	10	13.5	3	4.1	4	5.4	3	4.1	26	35.1	74	100	(16)
1349	270	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	11.4	16	20.2	-	-	1	1.3	27	34.2	26	32.9	79	100	191
1415	124	10	7.3	13	9.4	7	5.1	38	27.5	4	2.9	50	36.2	-	-	12	8.7	4	2.9	138	100	(14)

(Sources: CRS 918.34, 918.35 and 919.36)

TABLE 3.6 (b) Income and expenditure of the compagnia di S. Jeronimo:
1468, 1473 and 1483 (In Lire di piccioli)

	INCOME	EXPENDITURE																				
		Masses		Devotional		Salaries		Festivals		Wax		Charity		Building		Heirs		Misc.		Total		Balance
			₹		₹		₹		₹		₹		₹		₹		₹		₹		₹	
1468	164	-	-	30	28.6	3	2.9	-	-	38	36.2	33	31.4	-	-	-	-	1	0.9	105	(100)	59
1473	178	-	-	15	7.6	6	3.1	-	-	61	31	111	56.3	-	-	-	-	4	2	197	(100)	(19)
1483	282	-	-	3	1.8	10	5.9	9	5.3	33	19.4	109	64.1	-	-	-	-	6	3.5	170	(100)	112

(Source: ACJ, Entrata e Uscita, 1468-1479, 1479-1489)

Despite the very scant information about the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino's finances, enough survives to make possible some comparisons with other confraternities. While its annual income in the early to mid-1340s was less than 10 percent of the compagnia di S. Pier Martire's, it was about the same as the compagnia di S. Zanobi's⁸¹⁾. In common with other lay associations, the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino

benefitted from the Black Death and income rose by over four times between 1345 and 1349, leaving the company with a large balance rather than its normal deficit. However, as we shall see in the case of Or S. Michele⁸²⁾, in the long run legacies did not necessarily enrich the recipient because of the obligations which had to be met.

The compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino was in debt by 1415, sharing the experience of many of the laudesi in the 1427 Catasto⁸³⁾. But the cause of its indebtedness was not the same, for a flagellant company had few commemorative masses to perform. Instead 36.2 percent of the income was spent on wax and oil, which was burned at the services, and the purchase of habits and whips for the membership⁸⁴⁾. The other large expense was work on the company's oratory, a cost which became an increasingly frequent element of the budgets of many flagellant companies, as they acquired chapels during the fifteenth century⁸⁵⁾. But this was funded directly from the members since, as can be seen from the virtual absence of the disciplinati from the 1427 Catasto, none of the flagellants had a substantial capital⁸⁶⁾.

Although the cost of building was not among the compagnia di S. Jeronimo's expenses in 1468 or 1483, in 1471 the members had paid 800 florins to the Arte del Cambio for their meeting-place in the Ospedale di S. Matteo⁸⁷⁾. The most substantial expense, however, in these years represented in Table 6(b) was on charity, for, in common with the other compagnie della notte, they combined subsidising the poor with taking the discipline.

We have seen that the flagellants, like the laudesi companies, provided a devotional framework within which an individual could further his spiritual development. A round of pious duties was prescribed, which included private as well as communal activities. Members were expected to recite litanies throughout the day, go to Mass, and take confession and communion throughout the year. In addition they worshipped together each week, and participated in para-liturgical ceremonies, which were adapted from the Divine Office. Finally special days were laid aside as festivals, when

the whole membership assembled to celebrate a more elaborate service in honour of the patron saint.

It would, however, be misleading to suggest that this description provides anything more than an idealised picture of the life of a flagellant company. Few confraternity members, apart from officials and novices, appear to have attended as regularly as the statutes prescribed. A rigorous system of surveillance was therefore instituted to ensure that at least a minimum number were present and that defaulters were corrected. But, if the compagnia di S. Jeronimo and the Gesù Pellegrino were representative, punishments were apparently no deterrent. Very rarely did as many as half the membership come to services⁸⁸⁾.

But this low attendance should not be taken to imply that the brothers did not take their membership seriously. A recent study of two flagellant companies in Florence suggests that men remained in a group for an average of about twenty years⁸⁹⁾. A confraternity, after all, offered a system whereby an individual could store up a fund of spiritual merit, which provided insurance against the terrors of purgatory. In the chapter which follows, we will see how somebody continued to benefit from this association even after his death.

FOOTNOTES

- 1: P.L. Melloni, "Topografia, diffusione e aspetti delle confraternite dei disciplinati", Risultati, 23-26; B. Pullan, Rich and Poor, 34-38.
- 2: Henderson, "The flagellant movement", 147-149, on the tradition of voluntary flagellation.
- 3: Jungmann, The Mass of the Roman Rite, 86-91; Cattaneo, Il culto cristiano in occidente, 290-291.
- 4: Moorman, A History of the Franciscan Order, 399-400; Cattaneo, Il culto cristiano in occidente, 280-291.
- 5: See, for example, the Paduan Anonimo di S. Justina writing of 1260: "In tantum itaque timor Domini irruit super eos, quod nobiles pariter et ignobiles, senes et iuvenes, infantes etiam quinque annorum, nudi per plateas civitatum, opertis tantum pudendis... bini et bini processionaliter: incedebant": Annales S. Iustinae Patavini, MGHSS, XIX, 179.
- 6: Delaruelle, Ourilac, Labande, Storia della chiesa, XIV.2, 842.
- 7: N. Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millenium. Revolutionary millenarians and mystical anarchists of the Middle Ages (London, 1970 ed.), 140.
- 8: Moorman, A History of the Franciscan Order, 457-478, discusses three leading Observants: S. Bernardino, St. John of Capistrano and St. James of the March.
- 9: C. Trinkhaus, In Our Image and Likeness. Humanity and Divinity in Italian Humanist Thought (London, 1970), II, 616-633. Vespasiano da Bisticci noted the participation of Donato Accaiuoli in this confraternity: Le Vite, ed. A. Greco (Florence, 1970-76), II, 23-24. For membership of Accaiuoli see Archivio della compagnia di S. Jeronimo, "Catalogo dei fratelli dal 1410 al 1843". I am grateful to Bernhard Ridderbos for telling me about the existence of these archives.
- 10: See Humbert of Romans' remarks in De eruditione praedicatorum, ed. M. de la Bigne, Maxima Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum XXV (Lyons, 1677) col. LXXXIX-XC. Also G.G. Meersseman, "La prédication dominicaine dans les congrégations mariales en Italie au XIIIe siècle", Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum XVIII (1948), 130-153 and "Predicatori laici nelle confraternite medievali", Ordo fraternitatis, III, 1273-1289.
- 11: On Or S. Michele see Chapter 5, section (i). The compagnia di S. Zanobi chose friars from different Mendicant churches each year: CRS 2182. 36, f 9lv : S. Croce, 6.iv.1339; f 117r: S. Spirito, 20.iv.1346; f 124r: S. Maria del Carmine, 15.iv.1348; f 136v: SS. Annunziata: 22.iv.1351.

- 12: O. Kristeller, "Lay religious traditions and Florentine Platonism", Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters (Rome, 1956), 103-106; Hatfield, "The compagnia de' Magi", 128-135; Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 100-105.
- 13: BRF, Ricc. MS 2204, f 216v. Printed in Hatfield, "The compagnia de' Magi", 156.
- 14: Gesù Pellegrino of 1354: I capitoli della compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino, ed. P. Ferrato, (Padua, 1871) (Nozze Carlotti-Cittadella Vigodozere), cap. XXIX, 26; Gesù Pellegrino of 1454: BNF Magl. VIII.1282, cap. XVIII, f. 82v; S. Niccolò of c. 1400: Cap. CRS 439, cap. VI, f 2v; S. Francesco of 1400: Conv. R.S. 92. 390, cap. III, f 2v; S. Lorenzo in Piano of 1365: BLF., Ashburnham 970, f 18v; S. Antonio da Padova of 1466: CRS 137.cxxii, ff 8r-9r; S. Domenico of 1470: Meersseman, Ordo Fraternitatis, II, cap. II, 720; SS. Innocenti of 1480: Cap. CRS 719, f 6r.
- 15: For example Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XXIX, 26, and S. Niccolò (c. 1400), cap. V, f 2v.
- 16: See S. Niccolò (c. 1400), cap. V, f 2v: "ciascheduno de' nostri frategli vada d'ogni mattina la prima cosa alla chiesa a ringratiare il glorioso corpo del Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo".
- 17: The first, known as the compagnia di S. Giovanni Decollato, met in the Hospital of the Portatori di Norcia: see Appendix I, n.66. The second was the compagnia di S. Giovanni Scalzo of S. Pier Murrone: see Appendix I, n. 67.
- 18: The confraternity met in S. Croce: Appendix I, n. 22 . S. Bernardino died in 1444: Moorman, A History of the Franciscan Order, 466.
- 19: The company met in S. Maria Novella. For Vincent Ferrer's canonisation see A. Cappelli, Cronologia, cronografia e calendario perpetuo (Milan, 1978 ed.), 152.
- 20: See the forthcoming study of St. Jerome by Bernhard Ridderbos of the Instituut voor Kunstgeschiedenis, Groningen.
- 21: The compagnia di Gesù in S. Croce, for example, owned "una imagine di Nostro Signor crocifisso": BNF Magl. VIII.1500.6, cap. III, f 6r.
- 22: A. Prandi, "Intorno all'iconografia dei Disciplinati", Il movimento 496-508, and "Arte figurativa per le confraternite dei disciplinati", Risultati, 267-288.
- 23: Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale, sala XIX, n. 205.
24. The 1295 statutes are published by L. de Angelis, Capitoli dei Disciplinati della Venerabile Compagnia della Madonna sotto le volte dell'I. e R. Spedale di S. Maria della Scala di Siena (Siena, 1818). For more information on Sienese confraternities see V.L. Wainwright, "Andrea Vanni and Bartolo di Fredi: Sienese painters in their social context", (University of London PhD thesis, 1979), chapter 2.

25. There is no study of the liturgy of the Florentine church, even though the material exists in the BNF, Conventi Soppressi. See, however, for the Cathedral: D. Moreni, Mores et consuetudines ecclesiae Florentinae (Florence, 1794).
26. See the statutes of the following companies: Every Friday: S. Domenico (1470), cap. VII, 733; compagnia di S. Maria in S. Maria Sopr'Arno: BRF, Ricc. MS 2382, cap. VIII, ff 5r-v. Every Saturday: compagnia di S. Jeronimo in the Ospedale di S. Matteo: BNF Magl. XXXII.43, cap. II, f 3r; compagnia di S. Jacopo in S. Jacopo Sopr'Arno: Archivio della compagnia di S. Jacopo, statuti, cap. I, f 7r.
- 27: De La Roncière, "La place des confréries", 43.
- 28: M. Cyrilla Barr, "Lauda singing and the tradition of the disciplinati mandato", 24, 26, commenting on S. Niccolò (c. 1400), cap. XV, ff 5r-v.
- 29: BRF Ricc. MS 2535, cap. XIII, ff 9r-v. For comparable services see: S. Niccolò (c. 1400), cap. XIV-XV, ff 4r-5v; S. Lorenzo (1365), ff 17v-18r; S. Domenico (1470), cap. VII, 733-735; S. Maria Sopr'Arno (L.C. 15th) cap. VIII, ff 5r-v; Assumptione (L.C. 15th), cap. VII, ff 6v-8r; Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XXX, 27-28 contains a vague description of the service.
- 30: Assumptione (L.C. 15th), cap. VII, f 7v.
- 31: Magl. VIII. 1282, ff 77r-78v.
- 32: Barr, "Lauda singing and the tradition of the disciplinati mandato", 21.
- 33: A. d'Ancona, Origini del teatro italiano, I, 184-190 on the flagellant devozione, and Ibid., 106-162 on the Umbrian drama.
- 34: Lists of festivals are found in, for example: Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XXX, 27; S. Domenico (1470), cap. VII, 735-737; S. Niccolò (c. 1400), cap. IV, ff 2r-v.
- 35: See above, Table 3.1.
- 36: Butler, The Lives of the Saints, I, 234. Candlemas was one of the main feastdays for the following: S. Giovanni tra le arcore (1363), cap. XII, ff 17r-v; S. Maria Sopr'Arno, (C15th), f 5r; S. Domenico (1470), cap. VII, 737; SS. Innocenti (1480), f 23v; Gesù (1332?), cap. X, f 15v.
- 37: S. Giovanni Battista tra le arcore (1363), cap. IV, f 4r: "bella e honorevole quanto se puoi". None of the statutes of the Florentine flagellant companies of the Trecento indicate that they had an elaborate ritual during Holy Week, although the ceremony itself was a central event in their liturgical year. Cf Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XII, II, S. Giovanni Battista tra le arcore (1363), cap. IV, f 4r.

- 38: S. Domenico (1470), cap. VII, 736; S. Giovanni Battista tra le arcore (1476), ff 19r-20v; S. Niccolò (c. 1400), a late-fifteenth century text of the Office is bound with the earliest statutes.
- 39: S. Giovanni tra le arcore (1476), cap. IX, ff 14r-v; S. Lorenzo in Piano (1365), f 37r; S. Domenico (1470), cap. X, 735; Innocenti (1480), cap. XVI, f 2lv.
- 40: S. Giovanni tra le arcore (1476), f 19v refers to a "choro"; while S. Domenico (1470), cap. VII, 733 to "coristi".
- 41: A. d'Ancona, Origini del teatro italiano, I, 164.
- 42: Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XII, II. Public processions took place, for example, on the Feastday of St. John the Baptist and when the miraculous Madonna was brought down to Florence: Gesù (1332?), cap. III, ff 6v-7r; S. Giovanni Scalzo (1454), cap. XVI, f 11r; S. Lorenzo in Piano (1365), ff 30v, 36v-37r; Innocenti (1480), f 22r.
- 43: The earliest description of the Holy Week ceremony appears in S. Jeronimo (1410), cap. II, f 3v.
- 44: Following Canon 21 of the 1215 Lateran Council: C.H. Hefèle, H. Leclercq, Histoire des conciles, V.2, Canon XXI, 1349-1351. This requirement was echoed in the statutes of all confraternities, especially those of the fifteenth century. See, for example, S. Jeronimo (1410), cap. II, f 3r. Indeed the Archbishop of Florence modified statutes if the compilers had not made clear enough members' duty to take communion in their parish: S. Antonio da Padova (1466) ff 18r-v.
45. S. Domenico (1470), cap. VII, 737: "uno sermone exortatorio a penitentia".
- 46: S. Giovanni Battista tra le arcore (1476), cap. XIV, ff 19r-20v. See also: S. Niccolò (c. 1400), ff 9r-27r discussed by C. Barr, "Lauda singing and the tradition of the disciplinati mandato", 30-31; S. Jeronimo (1410), cap. II, f 3v; S. Domenico (1470), cap. VII, 736; S. Giovanni scalzo (1456), cap. XV, ff 10v-11r; S. Paolo (1472), f 20v discussed by Hatfield, "The compagnia de' Magi", 125. See also Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 99-105.
- 47: Matthew XXVII, 29-31, Cf. Meersseman, Ordo fraternitatis, 718.
- 48: C. Barr, "Lauda singing and the tradition of the disciplinati mandato", 28-29.
- 49: Ibid., 28-31.
- 50: A. d'Ancona, Origini del teatro italiano, I, 106-162.
- 51: The main compagnie della notte were: S. Jeronimo (1410); S. Paolo (1434), S. Jacopo (1460), and S. Antonio Abbate (1484). Cf Appendix 1, nn. 107, 126, 78, 7.
- 52: B. Varchi, Storia fiorentina II, ix, 99 describes them as "le quattro più segrete e più devote dell'altre".
- 53: Vespasiano da Bisticci, Le vite II, 23-24 recounts of Donato di Neri Acciaiuoli's membership of the compagnia di S. Jeronimo that he

"andava ogni sabato quand'era in Firenze... e albergavavi la notte, et dormivavi in su uno sacone".

- 54: S. Jeronimo (1410), cap. VI, f 7v: from the 1 September until Easter the brothers rose at 3.00 a.m. and after Easter at 2.00 a.m.
- 55: Ibid., f 7r.
- 56: For the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino see CRS 910.6, ff 73r-84v, 910.7, ff 1r-77v and 910.8, ff 1r-24r, and the compagnia di S. Jeronimo: ACJ Libri della Rasseona, 1432-1444 and 1445-1466.
- 57: See, for example: S. Giovanni tra le arcore (1363), cap. XLV, ff 13v-14v; S. Niccolò (c. 1400), cap. VIII, ff 3r-v; Gesù (1332?), cap. IX, f 14r; S. Giovanni Scalzo (1456), cap. XII, ff 8v-9r; S. Domenico (1470), cap. III, 721-723.
- 58: Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XXXVII, 31-32.
- 59: Founded on I.I. 1334: Gesù Pellegrino (1354), prologue, I.
- 60: The membership list of 16.iii.1337 is in CRS 910.6, f 93v.
- 61: CRS 910.6, f 19r:16. viii.1349: "Concio sia chosa che per la grande mortalitade del passato anno la nostra compagnia sia molta rimasta povera di gente...".
- 62: Cf Table 3 and also the findings of Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 128-129, on the compagnia di S. Paolo a century later.
- 63: CRS 910.6, ff 73v, 74r, 83v and 84r.
- 64: CRS 910.6, f 76v: 2.xii.1352: "Simone di Naldo spadaio...fu raso con diliberagione de' consiglieri ed altri huomeni della nostra compagnia, però che in udienza del corpo della compagnia riprese i capitani e sparò contro loro, dicendo che male aveano fatte certe chose che deliberatamente aveano fatte per bene della compagnia, vilipendendo le persone loro della qualcosa tucti quegli della compagnia ricevettono schandolo".
- 65: CRS 910.6, f 85r: 1.xi.1366 and CRS 910.7, f 11r: 30.xi.1366: "Nicholò di Ceccho chapitano vecchio, troviamo che nel detto uficio fecie molte chose senza richiederne i chompagni suoi e infra l'altre chose fu chagione di mandarne Frate Agnolo nostro chorrettore, per la quale chosa mise molto schandolo tra fratelli, e troviamo che fecie paghare cierti danari e disdiciegli e non si può sapere a chi si paghavano e per molti altri fatti chomessi...".
- 66: Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XXXVIII, 32.
- 67: For example CRS 910.7, f 21r: 25.iii.1368: 23 members were punished for missing confession in the past. 25 March was the day on which each member's attendance record was examined.
- 68: See the cases of Giovanni Bettini Biagio di Jacopo on 30.xi.1365 CRS 910.7, f 5r: "che stieno II tornate alla messa tutto l'uficio

cholla vesta nera e dichino XXV Paternostri con Ave Maria chon disciprina e chiascheduno de' fratelli ne dieno loro una cholla disciprina e ciascheduno de' fratelli dira "Io dato sia per Dio" e le dichino "sempre, sempre" e chiegino perdonanza a frate".

69: CRS 910.7, ff 4r, 17r.

70: Cf Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 135, 139.

71: Provv. Reg. 134, ff 208v-209r: 19-20.ii.1444. Discussed by N. Rubinstein, The Government of Florence under the Medici (1434 to 1494), (Oxford, 1966), 118 and Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 167.

72: The veduti were men who were drawn for the three highest offices (the Tre Maggiori), but who were temporarily disqualified from taking their seats: N. Rubinstein, The Government of Florence, 37.

73: Provv. Reg. 143, ff 32v-33v, 5.iv.1452.

74: Rubinstein, The Government of Florence, 118-119. Provv. Reg. 146, ff 147r-148r: 19-20.vi. 1455.

75: Balie 29, ff 10v-11r.

76: S. Jeronimo (1410), cap. II, f 3v.

77: S. Jeronimo (1410), cap. II, f 3v.

78: Ibid., on the feast of St. Jerome, when a sermon was preached and the members ate a "sobria collatione".

79: Cf ACJ, Libro della Rassegna 1445-1466, ff 110v-115r. In the first eight months of the year "Non può" was written in the margin against twenty-six of the absentees.

80: See Table 5, Holy Thursday 1455, 106 members attended out of a possible 163.

81: See Chapter 2, Tables 2(a) and 2(b).

82: See Chapter 7, section 2, for Or S. Michele's financial crisis in the 1360s.

83: See Chapter 2, Table 3.

84: The sums of columns 5 (wax and oil) and 9 (devotional).

85: The compagnia di S. Paolo, for example, bought the Trinita Vecchia for 300 florins in 1438: CRS 1579, f 58r. The following built new oratories: the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino in 1455: CRS 906.A, f 11r; the compagnia di S. Domenico in 1465: S. Domenico (1470), Prologue, 698; S. Antonio Abbate began theirs in 1490: CRS 112.13, f 1r.

- 86: The compagnia degli Innocenti in S. Maria Novella had a house worth 50 florins (Catasto 291, f 168v); S. Alberto in S. Maria del Carmine received income from a bequest of Lire 25 (Catasto 293, f 30r); S. Giovanni Battista lo scalzo owned a farm worth 257 florins, a pair of bulls at 18 florins and some oak woods which were not valued (Catasto 293, f 30v).
- 87: ACG, "Memorie di nostra compagnia", f 1.
- 88: See above Tables 4 and 5. Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 135 concludes that an average of 35 percent of the compagnia di S. Paolo's membership attended services.
- 89: Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 126.

CHAPTER 4

Death, Bequests and the Religious Confraternity

In the preceding chapters we have outlined the functions of the two main types of Florentine devotional company, the laudesi and disciplinati. We have seen how these confraternities provided an organisation, which gave members an incentive to lead a more Christian life through good works and a round of pious acts, which were performed individually and in common. By diligently carrying out these duties, members helped to accumulate a fund of spiritual merit from which they and their companions could later benefit. Therefore one of the main purposes of joining a confraternity was to prepare oneself for death, as Domenico Pollini noted when he entered the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino¹⁾:

Memoria che questo dì V d'agosto 1453 chol nome di Dio fui accettato nella compagnia del Pellegrino... ringratio l'Onipotente iddio che mi prepara la via a fare penitentia de' miei pechati. E così lo priego mi facci perseverare in buona e fruttuosa penitentia sì che alla fine mia egli per sua misericordia m'acetti in vita eterna e che io lo possa sempre lodare, ringratiare, e magnificare chome è degna e gusta cosa.

Confraternities offered a number of services to members after they had died. Brothers attended each others' funerals and later a series of masses were said for their souls. Indeed the provision of anniversaries was probably one of the main reasons that men joined a company, especially for those who could not afford to employ a chantry priest. Most confraternities also performed other commemorative services, for which they required payment. However, as we shall see, those companies which were left bequests rapidly discovered that they led to obligations which could radically influence the way they developed.

1 Funerals

The services which the laudesi and disciplinati companies provided for deceased members were essentially the same, except that the latter were more closely involved in the preparations for the funeral²⁾. This stemmed from the more closely-knit nature of flagellant groups and was symbolised by the fact that the corpses were often dressed in the habits which they had worn during their lives.

Once the captains of a flagellant company had decided that a member merited the full honours of a company funeral, two officials were sent to the deceased man's house to wash and dress him before he was placed in the company's bier. A hood was placed over the head, belt tied around the waist, a whip placed in the right hand and the arms folded in front of the body in the form of a cross. The officials then returned to the oratory and either the whole or part of the company processed to the dead man's house. On arrival eight members went inside to bring out the body, leaving the rest kneeling around the coffin. The dead man was covered with the company's pall and the coffin was carried to the church where the funeral was to take place. The procession was led by a member with a cross or a banner and the other brothers followed, carrying lit candles and singing lauds and orations³⁾. A laudesi company's procession was organised in a slightly different

fashion. The members of the compagnia di S. Zanobi, for example, were led by two black-robed paupers⁴⁾ and the messenger carrying the pall, and were followed by the officials in strict order of precedence⁵⁾. When the funeral cortège arrived at the church, all the fratelli knelt around the coffin while the office of the dead was said, and then accompanied the corpse to its final resting place, singing orations around the graveside during the interment⁶⁾.

The participation of members at the last rites of one of their brothers did not replace, but was part of the funeral organised by his family⁷⁾. The advantage of being a company member was that the funeral was on a much larger scale than if it had been attended simply by his "parenti, amici o vicini"⁸⁾. The presence of up to 100 hooded men each carrying blazing tapers and singing lauds must have been as impressive a sight as the funerals of dignitaries attended by the Misericordia today. But there was also another advantage. From 1281 the Commune had repeatedly prohibited the use of richly worked cloth or the carrying of excessively large candles⁹⁾. Confraternities were, however, exempted¹⁰⁾ and supplied palls embroidered with representative symbols. The one belonging to the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino, for example, contained a design of a pilgrim surrounded by a group of kneeling flagellants¹¹⁾. While the compagnia di S. Zanobi's was made of vermillion cloth, into which was woven a scene showing the Annunciation of Mary¹²⁾.

A confraternity, therefore, imparted a splendour to a member's funeral, which many people might not have been able to afford, even if the sumptuary laws had not been enforced. This function was especially appreciated during epidemics when there was a very high demand for any organisation; which could afford to employ priests and had time to devote to burying bodies with the proper ceremony. Some companies even extended this service to outsiders,

In 1348 the compagnia di S. Frediano, had interred ninety-two people in the first three and a half months of the year¹³⁾, even before the Black Death had begun properly, and the compagnia di S. Zanobi 229 between 6 April and 20 June¹⁴⁾. The burial of non-members was not, however, a feature typical of most devotional companies. Even the laudesi society of S. Frediano, which had been founded in 1324 with the express purpose of interring paupers, ceased to perform this function soon after the Black Death had ended.

In more normal times a member of a confraternity could choose whether he was laid to rest in his local parish or his company's tomb¹⁵⁾. The latter were immediately identifiable by the confraternity's insignia, which was carved on the outside, mirroring the symbol which appeared on the company's banner or pall¹⁶⁾. For example, the compagnia di S. Agnese's grave in S. Maria del Carmine was distinguished by an image of the Virgin surrounded by a group of brothers in prayer¹⁷⁾. If interred in a company tomb, a member had the satisfaction of knowing that he would be buried alongside the remains of successive generations of other fratelli and in a place which was frequently the centre of commemorative masses. In this way, even the humbler Florentines were able to guarantee that they would be buried inside a church, which was more prestigious than in an open cemetery¹⁸⁾. Furthermore since the majority of confraternities met in friaries, members could share a privilege of being laid to rest in a Mendicant church, usually reserved for the leading families of the city¹⁹⁾.

2 Commemorative services

Wherever a member was interred, his soul was remembered by the company at a number of commemorative services, beginning on the day of his death or at the next meeting²⁰⁾. The first Mass which was the longest and referred specifically to the deceased, was based closely, like all other confraternity ceremonies, on

the Church's liturgy. The service consisted essentially of the ordinary office for the dead punctuated with orations, lauds and prayers familiar to the company, and was accompanied at disciplinati companies by flagellation. When the candles had been extinguished, a laud was sung, followed by a short sermon on the misery and fragility of life²¹⁾. The type of sentiments are presented in the first few lines of a treatise, which was written by a member of the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino²²⁾:

per due ragioni, secondo il mio parere, e la morte necessaria e utile: e prima perché la morte è fine d'ogni fatica e dovere; e secondo che indirizza e mena al fine ordinato da Dio.

Deceased brothers were subsequently remembered as one of a long series of names read out during the Mass for the dead²³⁾. In this way the confraternity once again imitated the practices of the official church. For centuries monasteries and then convents had had a monopoly of keeping necrologies and commemorating the souls of past brothers and benefactors²⁴⁾. Now lay companies employed priests on behalf of the dead. Indeed a recent book on death in late-medieval Avignon has observed that more and more testators in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries chose lay societies to perform their anniversaries in preference to employing clergy directly²⁵⁾. The confraternity was an established institution, which could be relied upon even in times of crises to fulfill its obligations in a way that an individual priest or even the family of the deceased could not²⁶⁾.

Each month masses for the dead were incorporated within ordinary meetings, but the most significant was on 2 November. when the souls of the departed were remembered throughout Christendom. Members of one flagellant company in S. Maria Novella assembled in their oratory to say the office for the

dead with litanies, penitential psalms and prayers for all past members and relations. The service was timed to coincide with the friars' tour of the tombs of the church. They halted at the confraternity's oratory and were met by the assembled company, who were dressed in their habits and knelt holding lit candles²⁷⁾. A laudesi confraternity in the same church completed the service by offering a meal to the members and friars. In November 1313, for example, they consumed a barrel of wine and 100 loaves of bread, suggesting the presence of at least 100 people if each one ate a loaf²⁸⁾.

Some companies also devoted separate meetings to commemorate "benefactors", who had contributed towards large expenses, such as building their oratory. The compagnia di S. Domenico, for example, held three such services each year and invited the friars of S. Maria Novella to sing the Mass for the men and women who had patronised the society²⁹⁾.

Some members felt that these large, impersonal services were insufficient for the health of their souls and endowed the confraternity with income from property to pay for a series of anniversary masses devoted to them alone. The most common was a rinovale, which was a much less public affair and attended by the officials of the company and occasionally descendents of the testator. The service was again based on the Mass of the dead, with emphasis being placed on the performance of the sequentia de morti, the de profundis and the lauds which had been requested by the deceased³⁰⁾. A testator might also require a vigil on the feastdays of a particular patron saint, when his estate would pay for the candles burned and the man or woman's name would be remembered during the service³¹⁾. Yet again somebody might pay for the oil burned in a company's oratory. The compagnia di S. Pier Martire, for example, was paid by the heirs of one testator to subsidise the cost

of illuminating Duccio's Rucellai Madonna, which formed the centrepiece of the laudesi's chapel³²⁾. The same company also specialised in another type of service, the pietanza, which appears to have been restricted to companies meeting in conventual churches in imitation of the friars. The main characteristic of the occasion was a meal, which was eaten in remembrance of the testator and attended by the captains and the relatives of the deceased³³⁾. Apart from the obvious model of the Last Supper, this ceremony also recalled the meals which were eaten immediately after a funeral and to which friends and even neighbours were invited³⁴⁾.

3 (i) Bequests

Testators could thus expect a confraternity to perform a wide variety of commemorative services. The bequests which paid for them were important not just for the testators' souls, but also for the effect which they had on the confraternities which received them. The acceptance of a legacy usually led to a series of obligations, which began with the anniversary mass and could involve giving money to the relatives of the deceased, the buying and selling of property, and the collecting of rent from tenants. All these new duties involved the officials in time-consuming tasks which had not been envisaged by the founders. Confraternities therefore had to confront a problem which was similar to the one that had bedevilled the early history of the Mendicant Orders. Was not the fervour and simplicity of the early years likely to be spoilt if they were distracted by the administration of bequests and property? On the other hand, they needed an adequate source of income if they were to care for members' souls and fulfill their obligations towards testators.

The two main types of Florentine devotional company chose

different options. in their policies towards bequests. The laudesi with their less strict insistence on asceticism and penitence, were more prepared to accept property³⁵⁾. The flagellants, on the other hand, retained until the late fifteenth century an almost complete indifference to possessions³⁶⁾; some statutes even ordained that the captains should sell any legacies and distribute the proceeds to the poor³⁷⁾. This divergence in attitude was to have important effects on their respective developments during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Although fewer bequests were left to the laudesi than the large charitable companies, such as Or S. Michele, their statutes display a growing preoccupation with obligations to testators. This was first most obvious in the regular election of syndics, who from 1329 formed an important part of the administrative machinery of many laudesi companies³⁸⁾. Then the duties which were performed under the terms of bequests themselves became part of the company's raison d'être. This can be seen in the enactment of commemorative masses, and when money had been left for specific charitable purposes, such as giving dowries to girls or running homes for widows or reformed prostitutes³⁹⁾. In these cases officials did not just employ priests to say mass, but had to exercise their own judgment on the suitability of particular types of women.

In stark contrast the flagellant groups tended to remain aloof from these activities, which helped them to retain the original character of their devotion. Very few of them owned property, until the late fifteenth century. This therefore obviated the need to elect syndics and celebrate commemorative masses for individual testators. The result of this policy can be seen when comparing the tax returns of the laudesi and disciplinati companies in 1427. Nine of the former appeared in the records of the Catasto with a joint capital of 29,971 florins, while there were only three flagellant groups whose assets amounted to 105 florins⁴⁰⁾. We will turn now to look at the influence of bequests on the development of one of the richest laudesi companies.

3 (ii) Bequests to the compagnia di S. Pier Martire⁴¹⁾

The relationship between the company and the Dominicans of S. Maria Novella was so close that one historian has even maintained that the confraternity's main function was the administration of the convent's property⁴²⁾. While this may have happened for a short time in 1304⁴³⁾, the laudesi society maintained a separate identity as an organisation run by laymen until the middle of the fifteenth century. The bequests summarised in the following table were therefore made to the confraternity and not the friars, even though the latter may have benefitted from their enactment:

TABLE 4.1 Bequests left to the compagnia di S. Pier Martire, 1290-1478

Year	No.	Av./year
1290-1309	1	0.05
1310-1329	10	0.5
1330-1347	4	0.2
1348-1349	10	5
1350-1369	17	0.85
1370-1389	21	1.05
1390-1409	16	0.8
1410-1429	11	0.6
1430-1449	9	0.45
1450-1469	6	0.3
1470-1478	2	0.2
Total	103	0.91

(Source: B.L. Add. MS 17, 310; Catasto 989, ff 670r-679v.)

The confraternity was left a fairly steady stream of bequests during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. An average of just less than one a year was, as we shall see in the next section, many fewer than the total number received by the large charitable companies of the Misericordia and Or S. Michele. Nevertheless the compagnia di S. Pier Martire's gradual accumulation of goods from the late thirteenth century onwards gave it a far larger capital than any other devotional society⁴⁴⁾.

Although the confraternity received few bequests before the third decade of the Trecento, the numbers grew considerably during the Black Death, confirming the notion that there was a greater propensity to leave property to religious corporations at times of crisis⁴⁵⁾. The falling off during the fifteenth century may reflect the fact that there were fewer severe epidemics⁴⁶⁾, but could also be linked to the company's declining reputation. The Catasto indicates that the compagnia di S. Pier Martire was in debt by 1427⁴⁷⁾. In an effort to explain why this should have happened, the table on the next page traces the development of the company's finances over the previous 100 years and isolates the main elements of its income and expenditure:

TABLE 4.2 Income and expenditure of the compagnia di S. Pier Martire,
1322-1427 (in Lire di piccioli)

	INCOME				EXPENDITURE				BALANCE
Date	Total		Rent		Total		Commem. Services		
	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.
1322-23	277	100	147	53	263	100	122	46	14
1332-33	237	100	106	45	229	100	113	49	8
1370-71	1590	100	949	60	- ⁺		-	-	-
1390-91	2106	100	1404	67	1785	100	1219	68	321
1400-01	1792	100	1398	78	1072	100	788	74	720
1411-12	2204	100	1668	76	2084	100	1074	52	120
1418-19	3337	100	2603	76	3111	100	1011	33	226
1427	3182	100	- ⁺	-	3546	100	2387	67	(364)

+ = Information not available

(Source: Conv. R.S. 102, 291-295; Catasto 293)

Evidently in the early fourteenth century the confraternity, like Or S. Michele ⁴⁸⁾, spent almost exactly what it received. However, presumably as a result of the growth in receipts from bequests following the Black Death, the company made a profit; by 1400-1401 this amounted to Lire 720. Only ten years later the favourable balance had been much reduced by the communal taxes, which had been levied on all ecclesiastical institutions as a measure to underwrite the large State deficit caused by the conquests and subsequent garrisoning of Pisa. In 1410-1411 the compagnia di S. Pier Martire paid in taxes Lire 484 or 22 percent of its total income ⁴⁹⁾.

Despite this communal imposition the company was making a slightly increased profit, notwithstanding the purchase of three properties totalling Lire 980 ⁵⁰⁾. However, this improvement did not continue. Although the confraternity was not required to contribute to the Catasto, it had a deficit of Lire 364 in 1427. The reasons for this are not clarified either by the records of the Commune or the company, but may relate to a drop in income from rents when the Government attempted to confiscate confraternity goods following the 1419 prohibition ⁵¹⁾. Even if the compagnia di S. Pier Martire lost property for a short period, the delicate balance between income and expenditure would have been upset, since all bequests carried with them a set number of commemorative obligations the value of which was always underwritten by the rent.

The indebtedness of the company would have caused concern not just to the membership, but also to the Dominicans who received up to 93 percent of the company's income in exchange for the performance of commemorative services ⁵²⁾. In time, therefore, the friars decided to intervene in order to preserve their own interests. In 1441, when Eugenius IV was staying at S. Maria Novella, a Bull was obtained from the papal chancery according to which all the confraternity's present and future property

was made over to the Dominicans⁵³⁾. In this way the company's inheritance was placed beyond the reach of the Commune, should the Priors decide to use a political excuse in order to appropriate confraternity assets. However, two years later when another prohibition of confraternities was introduced⁵⁴⁾ the captains feared that the company's property might be endangered either by confiscation or by tenants reneging on their rents. An appeal was made to the Pope, who ruled that two confraternity members and two friars should be elected to administer the company's business during the time that the Commune forbade the society to meet⁵⁵⁾. However, this had implications for the future. According to the statutes of 1447 half the board of captains were still friars and the laymen were chosen by the Chapter of S. Maria Novella⁵⁶⁾. Thus within the space of six years, the compagnia di S. Pier Martire had been transformed from an independent lay association with a substantial capital of its own into an organisation which administered property on behalf of the Dominican friars. To see whether the latter's intervention had any effect on the company's finances we will turn to an analysis of three account books between 1458 and 1488(see following page)

TABLE 4.3 Expenditure of the compagnia di S. Pier Martire in 1458, 1478 and 1488

PERIOD	INCOME	EXPENDITURE																Balance				
		Cont. Gm. Masses	Laudes	Other Salaries	Festivals	Wax	Charity	Building	Relics	Misc.	Total											
		L. 8	L. 8	L. 8	L. 8	L. 8	L. 8	L. 8	L. 8	L. 8	L. 8	L. 8	L. 8	L. 8	L. 8							
1458	2422	1660	73.4	104	4.6	217	9.6	42	1.9	36	1.7	39	1.6	27	1.2	13	0.5	125	5.5	2263	100	159
1478	3815	3254	82.2	90	2.3	211	5.3	64	1.6	15	3.9	196	4.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	3958	100	(143)
1488	3207	2702	73.4	57	1.6	166	4.5	217	5.9	20	0.5	38	10	-	-	480	13.1	-	-	3680	100	473

(Source: Conv.R.S. 102.298, ff 84v-89r; Catasto 989, ff 468r-469r; Conv.R.S. 102.301, ff 131v-136v)

In the short term the new regime seems to have solved the company's problems, for in 1458 the deficit had been turned into a balance of Lire 159. The captains had achieved this success by alienating property, even though this was theoretically against the terms of the bequests. But the friars had by-passed the problem by selling leases for the duration of the purchasers' lives⁵⁷⁾. However, this solution was not long-lasting.

Twenty years later the confraternity was in debt by Lire 143. Although the society's finances do not appear to have been unduly disturbed by the six-year suppression of Florentine companies from 1458 to 1464 or the prohibition of 1471⁵⁸⁾, these laws may have been used as an excuse by tenants who wished to avoid paying rent. The smooth running of the administration was also probably affected by the epidemic which swept through Florence in 1478⁵⁹⁾. But these financial problems were not unique to the compagnia di S. Pier Martire; as we have seen, they were shared by other laudesi companies in the period⁶⁰⁾.

In each of the three years represented in Table 3 the single largest expense was still the performance of commemorative services. The 1447 statutes had emphasized the captains' responsibility towards testators⁶¹⁾.

Considerando maximamente che detti lasci suti fatti per rimedio delle anime che fossono obrigate ad alcuna pena del purgatorio. Et debbono attendere che detti lasci si faccino secondo la intentione di chi ae lasciato.

The obligations stemming from the company's inheritance were considerable. In 1488, for example, the officials had to organise the celebration of 132 commemorative services per year, which meant between two and three a week⁶²⁾. But they were not all of

the same type and could vary from a simple rinovale to a nietanza and a mass, to a festival combined with a meal. However, the most popular included a commemorative meal and explains why the average cost of these services should have been as high as Lire 20.10s.0d.

The development of the compagnia di S. Pier Martire into an organisation which was primarily concerned with the administration of property and the fulfillment of commemorative obligations meant that the company had in many ways become more orientated towards providing a service for the dead rather than the living. Although professional singers were employed to perform every day⁶³⁾, the expenses of festivals were largely underwritten by bequests rather than an active membership; by the mid-Quattrocento testators paid for thirty-four annual festivals⁶⁴⁾. The company statutes of 1447 confirm that the confraternity was a very different organisation from the traditional laudesi society. None of the chapters express any concern about the spiritual health of the members; no mention was made of the necessity to attend services, pay dues, or attend the funerals of their brothers. Instead emphasis was placed on the responsibility of officials to administer the company's inheritance and to see to the performance of the requisite commemorative masses and meals⁶⁵⁾.

4 Conclusion

By the fifteenth century the compagnia di S. Pier Martire was very different not only from the traditional model of a laudesi society but also from other confraternities of the same type. None of the others, as we have seen in Chapter 2, were as rich and nor did the friars of their Orders impinge so directly on their life. The reason that they were less affluent and maintained a greater independence was that they received fewer bequests, as the following table demonstrates:

TABLE 4.4 Bequests to six Florentine confraternities, 1300-1490

	1300- 1349	1350-1399	1400-1449	1450-1490	Total
S. Pier Martire	20	30	17	7	74
S. Zanobi	4	7	3	2	16
S. Agnese	-	2	10	2	14
S. Frediano	1	-	2	4	7
Or S. Michele	697 ¹	381	71	6	1155
Misericordia	362	149	- 11	- 11	511

¹ This figure includes only a few of the company's bequests during 1348-1349.

11 Information not available.

Sources: For S. Pier Martire: B.L. Addit. MS 17,310; Catasto 989, ff 670r-679v.
S. Zanobi: C.R.S. 2170.4, ff 1v-24r (libro de testamenti); Catasto 194, ff 23v-24r (1427); Catasto 602, ff 265r-v (1438); Catasto 989, ff 468r-469r (1478).
S. Agnese: C.R.S. 1.115, ff 1v-2r, C.R.S. 1.29, ff 16v-24r; Catasto 293, ff 29r-v (1427).
S. Frediano: C.R.S. 1 (S. Frediano) 88.1, ff 1v-3r (for 1390); Catasto 291, f 31r (1427); Catasto 989, ff 261r-v (1478); Acquisti e doni 41, ff 1r-9v (for 1488).

OSM: The number of bequests until 1346 in OSM 470 (rostra 48) seem to be reliable. Later figures, and especially for 1348, are not complete; OSM 460-463.

Misericordia: Bigallo 724 (CRIA 9977).

Each of the four laudesi companies has been arranged according to its relative level of wealth in the 1427 Catasto: 11, 363, 2146, 594 and 111 florins⁶⁶⁾. This order also corresponds to the number of legacies which had been left to each group, pointing to the close dependence of capital on inheritance. Thus by 1400 the most affluent, the compagnia di S. Pier Martire, had already been given seventy of the ninety properties which it owned by 1490, the compagnia di S. Zanobi eleven of the sixteen, but the compagnia di S. Amese only two of the fourteen and the compagnia di S. Frediano one of the seventeen.

However, the relative status of these four confraternities' finances changed during the fifteenth century. In 1478 their capital was 9448, 2242, 733 and 716 florins⁶⁷⁾. In other words, the wealth of the first two had not grown substantially, while the others had become much more affluent. The reasons for this reversal of fortunes have already been discussed in Chapter 2, and were related broadly, on the one hand, to the financial difficulties of the compagnia di S. Pier Martire and the compagnia di S. Zanobi, and, on the other, to the growing popularity of the two smaller laudesi companies from the quarter of S. Spirito. The attitude of prospective testators reflected these developments, so that in the Quattrocento the first and second confraternities received only 31 to 32 percent of their total bequests, while the third and fourth as much as 86 percent.

The number of legacies left to the laudesi companies can therefore be taken very broadly to reflect their popularity in a given period. The same was true of the two large charitable societies, which have been added here in order to put the smaller companies into a wider perspective.

The reputation of Or S. Michele was, as we shall see in the next chapter, at its highest in the first half of the Trecento. During the epidemic of 1340 the company was left 138 bequests⁶⁸⁾, and at the time of the Black Death its inheritance amounted to about 350,000 florins⁶⁹⁾. Although legacies continued to be received, the numbers dropped as the popularity of the company declined

because of scandal, maladministration, the intervention of the Commune, and general shortage of funds⁷⁰⁾. By the second half of the Quattrocento, if the records are correct⁷¹⁾, the confraternity received only six legacies. The Misericordia followed roughly the same pattern, although the public did not show its appreciation of the company's charitable services until the Black Death itself, when 355 legacies were left⁷²⁾. This was over double the amount the confraternity was to receive for the whole of the subsequent fifty years, which also points to the lessening of its reputation in the period following the great plague.

Bequests, then, could and did play a vital role in the development of many Florentine laudesi confraternities. Testators not only came to influence directly some of these groups' main activities, but also by leaving property they invited the interest of the Commune and the Church. The best example of the vulnerability of a company in the face of outside intervention is provided by Or S. Michele, which forms the main subject of the next three chapters. This study will enable us to continue our study of lay religion for the company was founded as a laudesi society. However, the following chapters also introduce another theme, which is the study of poor relief in a city in which paupers relied on voluntary organisations to provide them with help when rises in the cost of living could force into indigence a large number of people from the lower end of society.

FOOTNOTES

1. BNF Magl. VIII.1282, f 43r. According to Ronald Weissman, Pollini was exceptional because he joined the company in late middle age (58). However, there is no reason to suspect that younger men should not also have become members for similar motives, especially in an age characterised by frequent outbreaks of plague epidemics. (Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 144-145, 161)
2. Laudesi: S. Gilio (1284), cap. XXI, 38; S. Zanobi (1324), cap. XIV, ff 6v-7r; S. Zanobi (1427), cap. XVIII, ff 46v-47v; OSM (1284), cap. V, 186; OSM (1333), cap. XXVIII, ff 13v-14v, XXXII, ff 15r-v, S. Frediano (1324), cap. V, ff 2r-v; S. Frediano (1488), cap. XVI, f 9r.
Disciplinati: Gesù Pelleorino (1354) cap. XIV, 13-14; Gesù Pellegrino (1422), cap. XV, f 82v; S. Giovanni Battista tra le arcore (1363), cap. XXIII, ff 8r-v; S. Giovanni tra le arcore, (1476), cap. X, ff 14v-16v; S. Francesco (1400), cap. VI-VII, ff 4r-5r; Gesù (1332?), cap. VII, ff 11v-12v; S. Lorenzo in Piano (1365), ff 25r-v; S. Maria della Neve (1447), ff 22v-23v; S. Giovanni Scalzo (1456), cap. X, ff 6v-7v; S. Benedetto dei Neri (1385), cap. X, f 2r.
3. This description is based on Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XIV, 13-14, S. Giovanni tra le arcore, (1363), cap. XXIII, ff 8r-v. and S. Francesco, (1400), cap. VI-VII, ff 4r-5r.
4. S. Zanobi (1427), cap. XVIII, f 47r. On the role of the pauper as a symbolic intercessor see J. Chiffolleau, La comotabilité de l'au-delà. Les hommes, la mort et la religion dans la région d'Avignon à la fin du moyen age (vers 1320-vers 1480) (Rome, 1980), 307.
5. S. Zanobi (1427), cap. XVIII, ff 46v-47v. See also CPS 2176.13, f 44v.
6. S. Giovanni tra le arcore, (1363), cap. XXXIII, ff 8r-v.
7. Davidsohn, Storia, VII, 709-710.
8. S. Zanobi (1427), cap. XVIII, f 46v: "che i parenti, amici o vicini venghino a notificare il nostro sacerdote" of the member's death.
9. Davidsohn, Storia, VII, 710-711.
10. Ibid.
11. CRS 903.G, f 3r: "Una coltre nuova col pellegrino rachamato

a oro con battuti dintorno a seta".

12. CRS 2170.4, f 21v: "Una coltre di zendado vermiclia con due figure, la Nostra Donna e l'Angiolo che l'annunzia. Con un panno per tenere in su la coltre quando piove".
13. CRS 1 (S. Frediano), 29, ff 78v-81r.
14. CRS 2182.36, ff 124r-126r.
15. The following are examples of statutes which mention tombs:
S. Agnese (1290-1298), cap. II, 56, XXII-XXIII, 59; XVIII, 58; XXX, 60-61; S. Francesco (1400), cap. VIII, f 5v; S. Maria della Neve (1447), f 22v; Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XLIII, 39; S. Sebastiano de' Genovesi of 1474: BFF, Ricc. MS 1685, f 17v; S. Andrea dei purchatori of 1455: Cap. C.R.S. 854, f 16v.
16. The Sepoltuarii of churches usually record the graves belonging to confraternities. The 1439 Sepoltuario di S. Croce: MSS 619, f 6v: "sei sepulture sono della compagnia della Vergine Maria chiamata compagnia delle laude... senza numeri e segnato nel archio una + e per ogni corpo si mette in dette sepulture si paga soldi 20 a detta compagnia"; La compagnia di Sancto Francesco: f 14r: "Sepulture dirimpetto alla porta del Martello e dentro: due sepulture nella compagnia della disciplina sotto le volte: una è di detta compagnia a piè dell'uscio di fuori di detta compagnia". "Sepoltuario della chiesa di S. Maria Novella di Firenze" of 1617 (copy made by Andrea di Lorenzo Cavalcanti) MSS 621, f 25r: Compagnia di San Lorenzo in Palco: "Prima i fratelli di detta compagnia si seppellivano nel primo chiostro, nel quale anco oggi si conserva la sepultura vecchia dentrovi una graticola, che è il segno della compagnia"; f 54r: "A piè delli scaglioni dell' altare de' Pasquali di verso la piazza è una lapida grande di marmo con tondo nel mezzo con lettere attorno, e col segno della compagnia di S. Caterina da Siena, con due chiusini quadri di marmo"; f 69v: "Dinanzi all'altare di S. Jacinto sono due monumenti della compagnia del Pellegrino con chiusini quadri di marmo, e quelle lettere dentro in uno virorum, nell'altro mulierum"; ff 88v-89r: "A piè della soglia della porta, che va nella compagnia della Pura, monumento con quelle lettere della Compagnia del Sacramento"; f 92r: "Monumento della compagnia di S. Benedetto".
 For more information on company chapels in both these churches see M.B. Hall, Renovation and Counter-Reformation. Vasari and Duke Cosimo in S. Maria Novella and S. Croce (Oxford, 1979), 95-96, 103-104, 110-111, 114-117, 140-142, 154-167. See also V. Fineschi, Memorie sopra il cimitero antico della chiesa di S. Maria Novella di Firenze (Florence, 1787).
17. S. Agnese (1280-1298), cap. XXIII, 59.
18. Chiffolleau, La comptabilité de l'au delà, 154-179; Davidsohn, Storia, I, 67; F. Niccolai, La Misericordia di Firenze, cimiteri monumentali (Florence, 1983), 13-15.

19. Davidsohn, Storia, VII, 715, 723-727.
20. For commemorative services see:
Laudesi: S. Agnese (1280-1298), cap. XI, 57, xxxviii, 63;
S. Gillo (1284), cap. XXII, 38, XXIV, 39; S. Zanobi (1324),
cap. XV-XVI, f 7r; S. Zanobi (1427), cap. XX, ff 48r-49r;
OSM (1294), cap. IV, 185; OSM (1333), cap. XXVIII, ff 13v-14v;
S. Frediano (1324), cap. IV, f 2r, cap. X, f 3r, cap. XI,
ff 3r-v; S. Croce (1485), cap. XII, f 28r, XVII, f 30v, XVIII,
ff 30v-31r; S. Pier Martire (1447), cap. VIII, f 3v.
Disciplinati: Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XXXI, 28-29,
XLIII, 38-40; S. Giovanni Battista tra le arcore (1363), cap.
XXXIV, f 8v; S. Giovanni Battista tra le arcore (1476),
cap. XI, f 17r; S. Niccolò (c.1400), cap. XVIII, f 6r;
S. Francesco (1400), cap. IX, X, f 6r; Gesù (1332?), cap.
VII-VIII, ff 11v-13v; S. Domenico (1470), cap. VII, 734-35,
737-39; SS. Innocenti (1480), ff 25v-26r; S. Lorenzo in Piano
(1365), ff 25r-v; S. Paolo (1472), cap. VII, f 19r; S. Antonio
da Padova (1466), ff 11r-v; S. Maria della Neve (1447), f 18v;
S. Maria Sopr'Arno (L C.15th), f 7v.
21. S. Domenico (1470), cap. VII, 738.
22. I. Hijmans-Tromp, Vita e opere di Arnolo Torini (Leiden, 1957), 296.
23. The names were usually written up on a board, which was hung up in a company's oratory. See the 1341 inventory of the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino: CRS 910.6, f 93r: "I tavola che sta in santo ove sono scritti i morti della compagnia". These names were later copied into a book, which is in BNF, Magl. VIII.1282, ff 100r-101v and Magl. XXV, 394, ff 61r-68r. See also the compagnia di S. Zanobi: CRS 2176.13, f 44v.
24. See Dictionnaire d'archéologie Chrétienne et de liturgie, ed. F. Chabrol, H. Leclercq (Paris, 1935), XII, 44-49 on the tradition of necrologies. See, for example, the list of the dead members of the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino: BNF Magl. VIII.1282, ff 100r-101v.
25. Chiffolleau, La comptabilité de l'au delà, 273.
26. For the role of three companies during the Black Death see: Gesù Pellegrino: CRS 918.34, ff 64r-67r; S. Zanobi: CRS 2182.36, ff 45v-48v; S. Frediano: CRS I (S. Frediano), 29, ff 78v-81(bis)r.
27. Gesù pellegrino (1354), cap. XLIII, 38-40.
28. The compagnia di S. Pier Martire: Conv.R.S. 102.292, f. 3r. These occasions were satirised by Buoncompagno da Siena in his Cedrus, where he suggests that the popularity of certain charitable companies was due largely to the enormous meals they provided: Buoncompagno, Cedrus, in Briefsteller und Flormelbücher des elften bis vierzehnten Jahrhunderts, ed. L. von Rockinger: Quellen und Erörterungen zur bayerischen und deutschen Geschichte (Monaco, 1863), IX, 125-26. It should be noted that he was referring to these communal

gatherings and not, as has been suggested by Davidsohn (Storia, VII, 192-92), the more private commemorative pietanze.

29. S. Domenico (1470), cap. VII, 738-9; Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XLIII, 39. CRS 906.A, ff 2r-5r records "tutti quegli che feciono aiuto quando si murò questo nostro luogo": in the mid-Trecento and then Ibid., ff 11r-13r, for those who helped pay for the new oratory on 22.iii.1455.

30. S. Zanobi (1427), cap. XVIII, ff 47v-48r. For example, the will of Chele setaiuolo who left a bequest to the compagnia di S. Zanobi: CRS 2170.4, f 1v: 1313 (day and month not given).

31. For example Neri chiavaiuolo left money to the same company to "fornire di candele e dare le candele che saranno bisomo la villa di Santa Maria Maddalena nela detta chiesa": CRS 2170.4, f 2r: 16.v.1331.

32. B.L., Add. MS 17, 310, f 19v: "Al sacrestano di S. Maria Novella per olio per la lampana del crocifisso e della tavola maggiore della Donna Lire 5". Cf White, Duccio, 33-36.

33. These services are recorded in B.L. Add. MS 17, 310 until 1391. All pietanze to be enacted in 1419-1420 are in Conv.P.S. 102.317, and those of 1478 in Catasto 989, ff 670r-679r.

34. Chiffolleau, La comptabilité de l'au-delà, 143-149. Cf Davidsohn, Storia, VII, 716-717 suggests that these meals were not particularly common in Florence in the thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth centuries.

35. In 1329 the leading Florentine laudesi companies petitioned the Government for the right to elect syndics so that they could go to court to defend their rights against troublesome heirs: copy in Diplomatico di S. Maria Novella, 29.iii.1329. But despite this innovation it is often difficult to determine if the laudesi had anything as well-formulated as a "policy". In the revised 1427 statutes of the fairly affluent compagnia di S. Zanobi, for example, the only direct reference- apart from the syndic's office- was the chapter on the infermiere, one of whose main duties was to recommend the company to sick members, particularly if they were "rich and powerful", and suggest that they might leave alms for the benefit of their souls (CPS 2170.1, f 46r; this was common elsewhere in Italy: G. Mira, "Primi sondaggi su taluni aspetti economico-finanziari delle confraternite dei disciplinati" Risultati, ... 256 n.18). The fifteenth-century statutes of the laudesi of S. Croce, on the other hand, make no mention of property (S. Croce (1485), cap. V, XVII, XVIII: ff 24r, 30v, 31r), and they were the only well-established company not to submit a tax return in 1427. In contrast, the 1447 statutes of the laudesi of S. Maria Novella reveal a well-established system primarily concerned with commemorative services and the administration of property: S. Pier Martire (1447), cap. VI, XI, ff 4v-5r, 6r-v.

36. Neither property nor the election of a syndic were mentioned in: Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. X, 6-9; S. Niccolò (c.1400), cap. XVIII-XVIII, f 6r; S. Giovanni tra le arcore (1363), cap. XXIII-XXIV, ff 8r-v; Gesù (1332?), cap. VIII, ff 13r-v.
37. For example, S. Francesco (1400), cap. XXV, ff 1r-v, and S. Giovanni Scalzo (1456), cap. XVII, f 11v.
38. Copy of law of 1329 in Diplomatico di S. Maria Novella, 29.iii.1329. To be discussed further in Chapter 9.
39. The function of two laudesi companies in the Oltrarno; see Chapter 8.
40. For the laudesi companies see Chapter 2, Table 3. The three flagellant societies were: the compagnia di S. Giovanni Battista in S. Pier Murrone, the compagnia di S. Francesco in S. Croce and the compagnia di S. Alberto in S. Maria del Carmine: Catasto 293, ff 30v, 30r, 31r.
41. S. Orlandi, "Il VII centenario della predicazione di S. Pietro Martire a Firenze (1245-1945)", Memorie Domenicane LXIV, n.s. XXII (1947), 47-48, 109-120, 171-208.
42. See S. Orlandi, Ibid., III, appears to base his statement on S. Antonino's Chronicle (Divi Antonini archiepiscopi Florentini Chronicorum, (Lyons, 1586), III, cap. VI, 640), but failed to say that the Archbishop was probably reading back the situation that pertained in the fifteenth century. Followed by Meersseman, Ordo, II, 973.
43. Diplomatico di S. Maria Novella, 11.xi.1304, when the Order of Penitents adopted the Franciscan Rule.
44. See Chapter 2, Table 3.
45. De La Roncière, Florence, centre économique, II, 707-708, E. Carpentier, Une ville devant la peste. Orvieto et la peste noire de 1348 (Paris, 1962), 220-21.
46. L. Del Panta, Le epidemie nella storia demografica italiana (sec. XIV-XIX), (Turin, 1980), 131-132.
47. See Chapter 2, Table 3.
48. G. Villani, VII, 155.
49. G.A. Brucker, The Civic World of Early Renaissance Florence (Princeton, 1977), 211. See Conv.R.S. 295, ff 185r, 189r, 194r.
50. See CRS 102, 295, ff 179v-191v.
51. Prov. Reg. 110, ff 5r-v: 23.iii.1420.

52. Calculated from Catasto 989, ff 678r-679v, for 1478.
53. Diplomatico di S. Maria Novella, 11.i.1441.
54. Provv. Reg. 134, ff 208v-209r: 19-20.ii.1444.
55. Diplomatico di S. Maria Novella, 28.ii.1444.
56. See Conv.R.S. 102, 306, f 1r: "Tutti e cinque chapitani eletti per frati, capitolo [e] convento de'frati di Santa Maria Novella". There were five captains because from 1383 the company's frate correttore had become a permanent member of the board: Diplomatico di S. Maria Novella, 4.i.1383. The 1447 statutes codified this new situation: S PM (1447), cap. 1, f 1r.
57. Catasto 989, f 679v: "Beni alienati per le gravezze et bisoñi della compagnia et de' frati".
58. See Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 168-169.
59. Corradi, Annali delle epidemie, 314-315.
60. See above Chapter 2, Tables 3 and 4.
61. SPM (1447), cap. XI, f 4r.
62. Calculated from Conv.R.S. 102.301, ff 131v-136v.
63. SPM (1447), cap. VIII, f 5v.
64. Calculated from Catasto 989, ff 678r-679v.
65. SPM (1447), cap. XI, ff 6r-v.
66. See Chapter 2, Table 3.
67. See Chapter 2, Table 4.
68. Calculated from OSM 470 (mostra 48). For a fuller discussion of all that follows see Chapter 5.
69. M. Villani, I,7.
70. See below Chapter 6.
71. These figures are based on four registers of testaments: OSM 460-463. While they seem to be more reliable for the second half of the fourteenth century, they are totally inaccurate for the period before and during the Black Death.
72. Calculated from Bigallo 724 (Cria 9977).

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION:

Florentine Confraternities and Charity in the Trecento

The chapters which follow will examine the attitude of Florentine confraternities towards the poor. After a brief discussion of the policy of the main devotional groups in the Trecento, we will pass to the principal subject, which is the company of Or S. Michele. Apart from being the main institution in the city to administer poor relief for much of the century, this company was also an important laudesi society. By studying the growth of the cult of the Madonna and alms-giving together, we will therefore be able to combine our two main themes: piety and charity.

The statutes of most laudesi and disciplinati companies indicate that their main charitable activity was the welfare of their own members. The captains were to be notified immediately if one of the brothers fell ill and then were required to visit ¹⁾ the member and make sure that he had confessed to the company's chaplain "bene e diligentemente" and received the sacrament. ²⁾

Then, recognising that temporary loss of employment for the main wage-earner of a family might leave his dependants destitute, the captains provided a contribution towards maintenance. The amount given to a member varied according to the means of the confraternity, although all declared a willingness to give subsidies according to individual circumstances ³⁾. The 1326 statutes of the compagnia di S. Zanobi, for example, provided for the payment of up to 10 soldi per visit ⁴⁾. This sum was equivalent to just over two days' wages for a labourer in the building industry or one day for a mason ⁵⁾. The statutes are not, however, clear on how many times the subsidy could be repeated, but if, as in the fifteenth century, it was only once a week, members would have received no more than partial support ⁶⁾.

As we have seen ⁷⁾, the company's concern for a member did not stop short at his illness, because when he died his colleagues accompanied his body to the grave and said prayers and masses for his soul. Moreover if his family subsequently fell into indigence, they could expect to receive subsidies for a short period after his death ⁸⁾.

Although devotional confraternities were concerned about the welfare of members, few were interested in the poor in general⁹⁾. Some distributed alms at Christmas and Easter, but, in line with other communal corporations, such as the Parte Guelfa and the guilds¹⁰⁾, these were rarely significant sums.¹¹⁾ The one occasion when charitable expenditure did increase was during crises. For example the laudesi compagnia di S. Zanobi devoted 25 percent of its income to alms during the depression of the mid-1340s, while the flagellant compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino paid 20 percent in 1349, the year after the Black Death.¹²⁾ Although the income of both these companies had grown considerably in the late Trecento, charity represented only 5.7 percent of the former's budget in 1382-83 and 2.9 percent of the latter's in 1415¹³⁾.

There was, however, one group of laudesi companies which had a genuine interest in the poor. These were three confraternities which met south of the River Arno, in S. Maria del Carmine, S. Spirito, and S. Frediano. For example, the compagnia di S. Agnese had by the late-thirteenth century already devised a system which provided for the careful examination of all the paupers to whom alms were given¹⁴⁾. Although no statutes of the laudesi di S. Spirito survive, we know that they also helped members of their local community. In addition to subsidising paupers, they founded a house for reformed prostitutes, which became known as S. Elisabetta delle Convertite. The hostel was to provide a monastic setting in which these women could live out their lives in penitence for their sinful past¹⁵⁾.

The most exceptional of these Oltrarno laudesi societies was the compagnia di S. Frediano. The tardiness of its foundation in comparison to other laudesi companies¹⁶⁾ may help to explain why the charitable programme should have been so different. Not only was 1324 a year between two outbreaks of plague¹⁷⁾, but also by the mid-1320s some of the poorer Florentines were already finding the cost of living too high in relation to their salaries¹⁸⁾. The company provided two services to local residents of S. Frediano: to succour the "poveri vivi e morti del detto popolo"¹⁹⁾. Moreover the captains adapted the role of the company to suit the demands of the period. Thus before

the Black Death most of the resources were spent on burying the dead²⁰⁾, and in the second half of the century money tended instead to be given to individual paupers²¹⁾.

While most religious companies may not have been very concerned with the problem of poverty, some existed specifically to help the poor. Or S. Michele was undoubtedly the most important in Trecento Florence, but one should not allow its reputation to overshadow the other groups which performed similar functions. The hospital of S. Paolo, for example, gave subsidies to paupers in the mid-1320s worth up to Lire 666 per year, although twenty years later they had shifted their attention to treating the sick²²⁾. However, rather than the hospitals, the organisations which are normally associated with charity in this period are the companies of the Bigallo and the Misericordia²³⁾.

There is no surviving documentation to indicate the main activities of either confraternity before the Black Death. The earliest record of the Bigallo, for example, dates from 1379, but makes no reference to looking after orphans, the role for which the company is best remembered²⁴⁾. Instead the main function was the administration of nine hospices in Florence and the contado. The only other charitable service the company performed was the distribution, on a testator's behalf, of 2 florins a year to the prisoners in the Stinche²⁵⁾.

The compagnia della Misericordia is slightly better documented. Although the company is supposed to have been founded by St. Peter Martyr in the mid-thirteenth century²⁶⁾, Matteo Villani describes it in his discussion of confraternities' wealth in 1349 as "una compagnia nuova"²⁷⁾, thus indicating its relative importance to Or S. Michele. The history of these two companies runs parallel, for the Misericordia, after inheriting substantial sums during the Black Death²⁸⁾, was accused of corruption²⁹⁾. The Commune then moved in to regulate its wealth and elect the officials³⁰⁾. The Misericordia's book of deliberations for 1358 to 1366 reveals that the captains did occasionally distribute monetary payments, cloth and grain to the poor³¹⁾. But the sums involved were much smaller than those given by Or S. Michele, and were sporadic because they were dependent on receipts from bequests. Much of the company's spare cash during the

1350s and 1360s was instead probably spent on the building and decoration of the oratory in the Piazza S. Giovanni³²⁾.

Therefore despite the existence of a whole series of corporations such as hospitals, trade guilds and devotional confraternities, Or S. Michele's resources far outstripped those of any other institution in Florence, and we shall now turn to a detailed examination of the company's history between 1291 and 1433.

FOOTNOTES

Introduction

1. Although the appointment of special visitors of the sick became a standard procedure during the fifteenth century, only one company introduced them earlier: S. Agnese (1280-1298), cap. LXIII, 70, which had two officials "l'uno d'oltr'Arno e l'altro di quae".
2. S. Zanobi (1427), cap. XVII, f 46r.
3. Laudesi companies- S. Gilio (1284), cap. XX, 37-38; S. Gilio (14th), cap. XXI, 49-50; S. Agnese (1280-1298), cap. LXIII, 70; S. Zanobi (1324), cap. XII-XIII, ff 6r-v; S. Frediano (1324), cap. V, f 2r. The compagnia di S. Pier Martire paid between 3-7 soldi to paupers in each six-month period in 1313: Conv. Rel. . Sopp. 102. 292, f 3r. Disciplinati companies: Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XIII, 12-13; S. Giovanni tra le arcore (1363), cap. II, f 3v; S. Benedetto detto dei Neri (1385), f 2r, rubric of cap. XIV; S. Lorenzo in Piano (1365), f 24r. In the 1340s the Gesù Pellegrino gave individual payments to poor members of between 4-6 soldi: CRS 918, 34, f 57r: 21.xii.1345.
4. S. Zanobi (1324), cap. XIII, f 6v.
5. De La Roncière, "La condition des salariés", 17. Between 1326 and 1332 a labourer earned on average 4s 6d per day and a mason 8s 6d.
6. See, for example, the 1485 statutes of the Laudesi di S. Croce: cap. XII, ff 27v-28r.
7. See above, Chapter 4.
8. For example S. Agnese (1280-1298), cap. XVII, 58; and the compagnia di S. Pier Martire: "Demo a famiglia che fu di Nanni chalzolaio povero..soldi 5": Conv. Relg. Sopp. 102.292, f 3r:5.viii.1313.
9. For the laudesi companies see: S. Agnese (1280-1298), caps. VIII, 57; XLVIII, 65-66; LVII, 68; LX, 68-69; S. Frediano (1324), caps.V-VI, ff 2r-v. Significantly charity to the poor in general is not mentioned in either the 1326 statutes of the compagnia di S. Zanobi or the 1284 statutes of the compagnia di S. Gilio.
The disciplinati companies: Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XXI, 19-20, gave alms every month to "quelli religiosi o secolari preti o altri luoghi" in exchange for prayers for the members' souls; S. Giovanni tra le arcore (1363), cap. V, ff 4r-v.
10. The Parte Guelfa distributed L. 200 a year to institutions and "poveri et miserabili persone": "Statuto della Parte Guelfa di Firenze compilato nel MCCXXXV", ed. F. Bonaini, Giornale storico degli archivi toscani I (1857), cap. 1, 4-5. In 1301 the wealthy Calimala gave the poor L. 25 a year? L'arte dei mercanti di Calimala in Firenze ed il suo più antico statuto, ed. G. Filippi (Turin, 1889), cap. III, 75.
11. For example the compagnia di S. Zanobi bought bread to give

- to the poor for Christmas 1344: CRS 2182.36, f 113r. In fact the L. 10 spent on this occasion was higher than normal because of the shortage of grain: Pinto, "Firenze e la carestia del 1346-47. Aspetti e problemi delle crisi annonarie alla metà del '300", A.S.I., CXXX (1972), 54 n. 125.
12. See Chapter 2, Table 2 (b) and Chapter 3, Table 2.
 13. Ibid.
 14. S. Agnese (1280-1298), cap. LVII, 68: "si debbia fare limosina per la pasqua del Natale proxima, veduti e disaminati prima i poveri che ci fiero rechati, in fino in quantità di soldi xxxvi".
 15. In 1332 the captains of the confraternity petitioned the Priors of the Commune for the right to found the house: Provv. Reg. 26, f 8 bis r-v: 19.vii.1332. Copy in Acquisti e doni 45, ff 1r-2v: 19.vii.1332. See also Davidsohn, Storia, VII, 81-82 and the forthcoming Ph.D. thesis on Convertite by Sherrill Cohen for the University of Princeton.
 16. Founded in 1324: see Appendix 1, n. 59.
 17. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 673, 674, 679-682. "La condition...est déjà très préoccupante en 1326-1339": 677.
 18. Villani, IX, 222; IX. 319.
 19. CRS 2.88, f 1r.
 20. See the "Registro di morti che si sotterrano": for 1337-1384: CRS 5, 125. See above: Chapter 4.
 21. Records of alms appear in CRS 5.30.
 22. Newton, "Poverty and Charity", Chapter 2 and Chart 9.
 23. On the former see Passerini, Storia, 126 and the Misericordia: Passerini, Storia, 440-466 and U. Morini, Documenti inediti o poco noti per la storia della Misericordia di Firenze (1240-1525), (Florence, 1940), and La Misericordia di Firenze attraverso i secoli (Florence, 1975), ed. C. Torricelli, M. Lopes Pegna, M. Danti, O. Checcucci.
 24. Bigallo 729.
 25. Bigallo 729, f 2r lists the hospitals and other obligations, including the prisoners.
 26. Archivio della Misericordia di Firenze, Serie E, n. 357, f 1r.
 27. M. Villani, 1,7.
 28. M. Villani, 1,7, recounts that it inherited 25,000 florins.
 29. Ibid.: "[the alms] i quali si sribuirono poco bene per lo difetto de' capitani che gli aveano a distribuire". Evidence to support these accusations are found in the Misericordia's own records. Instead of giving money from wills to the poor, the captains were distributing it "più tosto a luoghi e persone non povere e non bisogniose": Bigallo 2. II, ff 3r-v: 13.xii.1358.
 30. See Provvisione Registri 36, f 3r: 13.viii.1348; Provv. Reg. 36, f 36r: 19.xi.1348; 39, ff 105-106v: 9.iii.1352. Printed in

Morini, Documenti inediti, 12-18; 18-20; 22-29.

31. Bigallo 2.11, f 5r:19.xii.1358 distribution of 96 florins to the poor; Ibid., f 17v: 3Q.xi.1359 fifty ghonelle were made for "povere persone e verghognose"; Bigallo 2.111, f 43r: 23.x.1386 the captains distributed 64 staiore of grain.
32. Passerini, Storia, 450-455 says that the oratory was built between 1352 and 1358. But H. Saalman, The Bigallo. The Oratory and Residence of the Compagnia del Bigallo e della Misericordia in Florence (New York, 1969), 10, indicates that the "vaults, upper parts and roof" were not completed until 1360-61. On the decoration see H. Saalman, The Bigallo, 19-24; G. Kreytenberg, "Dekoration der Stirnwand im Oratorio del Bigallo", Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz XX (1976), 397-403; G. Kreytenberg, "Alberto Arnolfini e i rilievi della Loggia del Bigallo a Firenze", Prospettiva XI (1977), 27-33.

CHAPTER 5

THE COMPAGNIA DELLA MADONNA D'OR SAN MICHELE

From the company's foundation

to the eve of the Black Death, 1291-1347

The history of the compagnia della Madonna d'Or S. Michele falls quite naturally into two distinct phases: before and after the Black Death. The great plague was a vital influence on the development of Or S. Michele and it brought the company a large number of bequests and thereby required it to expand its administration to cater for the enactment of wills. This in turn meant that the type of alms which were distributed by the company came to be dictated increasingly by the wishes of either the Commune or testators. The following chapters will reflect this chronological division for we shall deal in the first with Or S. Michele before 1348 and in the second and third with the more complex history of the confraternity after the plague.

Most historians have tended to isolate particular aspects of the company's activities. The most popular has been its policy of poor relief. It attracted the attention of Francesco Carabellese as long ago as 1895 in his article "Le condizioni dei poveri a Firenze nel secolo XIV"¹⁾. He was the first to consult its detailed books of limosina, but did so in a very superficial way. It was not until about eighty years later that they were properly analysed in the highly intelligent article by Charles de la Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté à Florence au XIVe siècle"²⁾. Most recent is the thesis of Jeffrey Newton, who compared Or S. Michele's records with those of the Ospedale di S. Paolo in order to establish the nature and geographical location of poverty in Florence before the Black Death³⁾.

Another scholar who has to be mentioned before going any further is Saverio La Sorsa, whose book on Or S. Michele, published in 1902, remains the only full-length study of the company⁴⁾. It

was he who first sketched out its history from its foundation until the end of the Trecento. His knowledge of the Or S. Michele archive was considerable and he published numerous extracts of documents, some of which have since been irremediably damaged by the 1966 flood. There remains, though, much new work to be done, principally because La Sorsa examined its evolution in a very unsystematic fashion.

The following analysis will attempt to show how closely connected were the many aspects of the company's activities and especially how the success of its alms-giving was dependent on the continued popularity of the cult of the Madonna.

1 Origins and evolution, 1291-1323: the cult of the Madonna

The company of Or S. Michele was from its beginning an exceptional confraternity. While all the other main laudesi societies in Florence met in private chapels in or near an existing church, it was founded in one of the busiest and most public squares of the city, the Piazza of Or S. Michele. The area already had a tradition of worship as the site of the Cistercian church of S. Michele in Orto, which had been knocked down in 1249 in order to create the grain market⁵⁾. In 1284 a loggia was built to provide shelter for the grain merchants⁶⁾, and it was on one of the pillars that a picture of the Virgin was hung. Over the next seven years a cult developed around the Madonna, probably among the merchants and their customers in the market. The cult acquired a corporate status in 1291 with the foundation of the laudesi company⁷⁾, receiving a formal framework three years later when the first statutes were drawn up and then approved by the Bishop of Florence⁸⁾.

Between the foundation of the confraternity and the compilation of its

statutes an important event had taken place which was to make Or S. Michele famous not only in Florence but throughout Tuscany⁹⁾.

Nel detto anno (1292) a dì 3 del mese di Luglio, si cominciarono a mostrare grandi e aperti miracoli nella città di Firenze per una figura dipinta di S. Maria ...sanando infermi, e rizzando attratti, e isgombrare imperversati visibilmente in grande quantità.

The popular nature of the cult was now guaranteed, helping to distinguish Or S. Michele from laudesi companies in other churches; indeed such was its success that it provoked the opposition of both the Dominicans and Franciscans, neither of whose laudesi companies could boast a miraculous Madonna¹⁰⁾. It was perhaps not so much the loss of face which was resented by the Friars as the large sums of money left at the shrine by the devotees. Public veneration automatically led to public dispersal of funds, since it was the company's policy to give away everything it received¹¹⁾. A secondary role thus emerged: the distribution of alms to the poor.

The public also expressed their devotion to the Madonna by leaving wax images at the shrine. According to Villani these votive offerings were given "per grandi miracoli fatti" and were made to represent figures of departed relatives as well as parts of the body cured by the Madonna¹²⁾. Indeed such was her popularity that soon a large part of the loggia came to be filled up with these voti¹³⁾. But tragedy struck in June 1304 when the fire which raged through the quarter melted all the wax together¹⁴⁾. Although the loggia was also damaged, it was soon after restored by the Republic and then in the early 1320s completely rebuilt. However, such was the power of the Madonna's fame that a popular legend grew up that she had escaped unscathed from the fire, increasing the fervour of her followers¹⁵⁾.

All of this, of course, necessitated a well-run organisation to supervise the cult. The confraternity's statutes of 1294 reveal that within three years since its foundation the company had

evolved a fairly large bureaucracy. While most other companies had no more than 6 to 12 officials, there were 35 at Or S. Michele¹⁶⁾. These included the voluntary captains, councillors and treasurers, and the others who were paid, such as the laudesi or the men who received the oblations of the faithful and sold candles at the oratory¹⁷⁾.

But the basic functions of the confraternity remained those of an ordinary devotional company. Thus laudi were sung each evening in front of the Madonna, the members met for vigils on the main feastdays, and masses were said regularly for the dead. The company thus accumulated a communal fund of merit through prayer and good works from which present and past members could benefit.

There was another activity which included both members and the public: the weekly sermon in the Piazza. Well-known preachers were employed, who no doubt attracted large crowds and therefore increased the company's revenue. For example between 1304 and 1309 Fra Giordano of Pisa delivered a series of sermons, sometimes as many as three a month. In 1305 he was present on the 11th, 22nd and 30th November for the festivals of S. Martino, S. Cecilia and S. Andrea, suggesting that devotional activity was back to normal a year after the tremendous fire¹⁸⁾.

Giordano's sermon on the feastday of S. Martino, one of the patron saints of charity, was particularly appropriate to the confraternity. He emphasized the virtues of alms-giving since it makes healthy the soul of the donor. But, as if encouraging the members in all their activities, he placed charity within its proper devotional context by telling his audience that the friends of God "usano le buone opere, usano la chiesa, fanno limosine, vengano alle prediche, e fanno gli altri beni"¹⁹⁾.

These general tasks echoed those that the confraternity's statutes laid down as necessary conditions of membership. More specifically members were required to recite Pater Nosters and Ave Marias every day and communicate at least twice a year²⁰⁾. But here their obligations ceased; in contrast to other companies, many of the duties usually done by a whole membership were enacted by the officials alone²¹⁾. Indeed one gets very little idea from these statutes of what it meant to be a member; there was no list of duties and the only formality appears to have been the inscription of a name on the matriculation role²²⁾. But the behaviour of members does appear to have been scrutinised for among the officials were listed four ammonitori,²³⁾ who passed to the captains the names of the people to be corrected. A fragment of an early fourteenth-century punishment book lists a series of rather trivial offences against the basic precepts of the Church and company: swearing, gambling, or frequenting taverns²⁴⁾. While none of these faults were particularly grave in themselves, their seriousness lay in the implied disregard for the basic ethos behind the statutes; without obedience it was impossible to run a company. One cannot know how representative were these records, but as the company grew it is improbable that such a rigid surveillance was maintained. By 1333, when the statutes were revised, the ammonitori appear to have been abandoned. Indeed only fifteen years before a provvisione had recognised the impossibility of the whole company meeting together since "in dicta societate sunt quasi omnes buoni homines civitatis et districtus"²⁵⁾.

Some idea of how the company had evolved since its foundation can be gained from these statutes of 1333²⁶⁾. The basic organisation had not changed greatly: it was still governed by a board of six captains who were advised by twelve councillors. But because the company's charitable role had expanded considerably, especially after

the 1329 famine, more officials were required for the new financial and pastoral work. There were two provveditori del bene e del utilità de' poveri, two messengers and two accountants who checked the accounts at the end of each term of office²⁷⁾. The expansion of the confraternity's charitable functions was also intimately linked with its devotional life, since without the miraculous Madonna there would not have been the crowds of pilgrims and worshippers²⁸⁾.

The cult therefore remained as important as before. The statutes prescribed the singing of laudi every evening in front of the tabernacle and a school on Sundays to teach the words to members²⁹⁾. Thirty-five of the Church's main feastdays were celebrated by a luminaria alle laude when the captains stood around the altarpiece holding lit candles; anybody else was permitted to join them if they supplied their own candle³⁰⁾. The Madonna was not continuously visible, but was covered with a silk veil except on Sundays, feastdays and during the sermon³¹⁾. Partly no doubt on the principle that devotion was increased if the adored object was not constantly available - it is still the practice with many famous objects of popular veneration, such as the Madonna of Impruneta or the Volto Santo of Prato - but also because the dust from the market would eventually have spoilt the picture if it had been left uncovered³²⁾. The problem is illustrated very graphically in one of the illuminations of the Libro del Biadaiolo, which shows the piazza during the 1329 famine. The Madonna is just on the edge of a mass of gesticulating men and women only barely controlled by the Commune's militia (see frontispiece)³³⁾.

The Libro del Biadaiolo illumination also gives one a clear idea of the appearance and function of the Madonna at the period, uncluttered by the image of the later fourteenth-century oratory which tends to overlay one's concept of Or S. Michele³⁴⁾. Attached to one of the pilasters of the loggia, there was little to distinguish the picture from an ordinary street tabernacle, except that it appears to have been larger and more elaborate.

There was also an unusual addition in the shape of a small room beneath the Madonna, with a counter at which an official sat to receive the offerings of alms-givers³⁵⁾. But given that at this stage, all the oratory consisted of was the construction around the pilaster³⁶⁾, its role must have been considerably more limited than the chapel of a normal laudesi company. We have seen that laudi were sung around the image, sermons were preached under the loggia and a general confession was heard in the evening³⁷⁾. But beyond that the "oratory" ceased to be the focus of their religious activities. Masses were held in churches throughout Florence. Each Monday morning the captains paid for Mass to be said in six separate churches in a sestiere, so that over a whole year each section of the city was covered. These services were commemorative masses for the souls of past members, a familiar aspect of confraternal life, but differing from the normal laudesi society since there was no suggestion that all the brothers should attend³⁸⁾.

Once again the impression emerges of a very considerable membership. It was drawn not just from all over the city, but also included those who lived in the Florentine contado.³⁹⁾ Admission was therefore much looser than the average devotional company, which required its members to live within Florence. Moreover provisions were made for including men as well as women⁴⁰⁾ and, more unusual, it was possible to inscribe the name of a sick or deceased person⁴¹⁾. One cannot calculate precisely the number of living members since no lists survive. But judging from the dues recorded in the company's account books in the winter of 1324-25, it is probable that 2 - 3,000 people belonged to Or S. Michele⁴²⁾. It was much larger than the average devotional company, which rarely had more than a hundred members. Villani may therefore have been correct when he said that Or S. Michele consisted of the "buona parte della migliore gente di Firenze"⁴³⁾.

However, the chronicler was less accurate when he suggested that each year Or S. Michele was supposed to have distributed Lire 6,000 from the very beginning⁴⁴⁾. In the next section we shall see why this would have been impossible even in the mid-1320s.

2 Second phase, 1324-1337: bequests and government protection

Or S. Michele's earliest surviving account books date from the winter of 1324-25, some thirty years after the company's foundation. The following table analyses both its income and expenditure:

TABLE 5.1

Or S. Michele's income and expenditure, l.x. 1324-27.1.1325⁴⁵⁾
(in Lire di piccioli)

Income											
Period	Dues		Heirs		Candles		Commem. Obligs.		Oblations		TOTAL
	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L. %
1.10 - 27.1	104	11	23.5	2.5	253	27.6	23	2.4	544	57.4	947.5 100

Expenditure														
Period	Charity		Salaries		Masses		Festivals		Heirs		Misc.		TOTAL	
	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%
1.10 - 27.1	1032	84.5	124	10.2	8	1.3	16	1.3	-		41	3.4	1221	100

(Source: Or S. Michele 248.)

The largest source of income (57.4 percent) was from oblations left by worshippers at the shrine,⁴⁶⁾ underlying the continued popularity of the Madonna over thirty years after the foundation of the company. The other significant sum was Lire 253 from the sale of the candles which were burned at services and bought by the public on their visits to Or S. Michele. Membership dues were the only other substantial sum, accounting for 11 percent of receipts.

An analysis of Or S. Michele's expenditure indicates that the captains really did give away most of the money which was donated to the company. 84.5 per cent went on charity. Other items were fairly negligible in comparison. The most important were the salaries of officials administering the cult and poor relief system. They accounted for 10.2 percent of the budget and included payments to

the laudesi, notaries, custodians, the man who sold the candles and received the public's oblations at the oratory, the chaplains who officiated at services and a syndic. Other items were smaller. For example, expenses over this period on festivals represented only 1.3 percent, although they rose slightly during the Christmas period. On 25 December and the three subsequent days, the company held a luminaria alle laude as well as paid for a preacher to give a sermon in the piazza after lunch⁴⁷⁾.

Bequests were not a significant source of income for Or S. Michele during the winter of 1324-25. Receipts from heirs amounted to 2.5 percent of the company's receipts and, as can be seen in Table 2, Or S. Michele was left only eight legacies during the whole of these two years.

TABLE 5.2

Income and bequests of Or S. Michele, 1291 - 1346⁴⁸⁾.

	Income	No. of Bequests
1290		
1	2508	
2	-	
3	4751	
4	4466	
5	3542	
6	3352	
7	4799	
8	3932	
9	3970	
1300	4136	
1	3231	
2	3498	
3	3955	
4	2814	
5	2824	
6	3447	
7	4174	
8	3186	
9	3218	
1310	4094	
11	-	
12	3123	
13	3208	
14	3329	1
15	3352	-
16	3007	2
17	2856	2
18	3307	2
19	3354	3
1320	2803	9
21	4975	2
22	4422	3
23	4710	5
24	3479	4
25	4937	4
26	5886	6
27	4667	2
28	9207	3
29	7629	1
1330	12223	7
31	14765	8
32	10299	10
33	14898	7
34	10613	9
35	-	25
36	15287	28
37	16200	29
38	17315 ×	25
39	12906 ×	41
1340	23852	138
1	16597	66
2	13777	36
3	-	42
4	13184 ×	37
5	15831 ×	26
6	11282 ×	21

+ = Approximate figures based on incomplete data extrapolated over a year.

(Source: Or S. Michele: 470, 472.)

There was a considerable difference between the company's income in the first three decades compared with the subsequent period. Between 1290 and 1319 average annual receipts were only Lire 3552, in contrast to Lire 11,576 from 1320 to 1346. The rise cannot be related directly to increased receipts from bequests until the late 1330s; in the previous period most of Or S. Michele's income derived from the public's oblations.

The growth of the popularity of Or S. Michele is also indicated by a series of privileges which were granted by the Priors to the company. In 1318, for example, a law had granted the captains the right to elect their own syndics without reference to the whole membership. In future it would be easier to deal immediately with an heir who wanted to dispute a bequest on the grounds that the company was not legally constituted⁴⁹⁾.

The sudden growth of the company's income from 1330 can probably be explained partly at least by the Signoria's policy during the famine of the previous year. Or S. Michele was singled out as one of the main agencies in Florence for the distribution of government funds to the population at a time when "molte sunt persone et familie miserabiles"⁵⁰⁾. The captains were to seek out poor people in the city and contado and give them money to buy food, but not more than 10 soldi to any individual⁵¹⁾. Recognising the company's usefulness, the Signoria also provided it with a new source of income. In future when a criminal was condemned by the Republic his goods were to be divided between the Commune and Or S. Michele: two-thirds to the former and a third to the latter⁵²⁾.

With these two acts the Commune recognised the importance of the company's role in the city: as a ready-made organisation to distribute alms to the Poor and one, moreover, which was popular with everybody by virtue of its religious rather than political status. The significance of the confraternity's position can hardly have been lost on the Signoria, based as it was in the heart of the grain market, which during that year had been the scene for considerable popular unrest⁵³⁾.

The Madonna, therefore, came to be seen as a generous patron, not just

because she provided miraculous cures, but also as a beneficent mother who fed her hungry children.

These provvisioni had a marked effect on the company's annual income, which from 1330 never again fell below Lire 10,000. The annual budget was now larger than the other two main charitable organisations of Florence put together, the hospitals of S. Maria Nuova and S. Paolo⁵⁴⁾. A further increase from the mid-1330s suggests an addition of other sources of income. Bequests may have been partly responsible. Thus from 1291 to 1329 Or S. Michele had been left only forty-eight legacies, while between 1330 and 1339 the number increased to 189 and in the subsequent seven years to 366.

It evidently took some time before it became popular among Florentines to remember Or S. Michele in their testaments. Even between 1310 and 1330 the company received only an average of three to four per year, which indicates that the public still preferred to show their appreciation of the Madonna's virtues by leaving personally sums of money or candles at the oratory. It was, after all, a public shrine at which acts of generosity might be rewarded by a public miracle.

The provvisione of 1318, which had given Or S. Michele the right to elect its own syndics, suggests that the company's relationship with some heirs was already difficult. But the problems were not entirely resolved, as was recognised by another law of 1331, which laid down the procedure to be adopted in future for disputes when the company was made executor or fidei-commissum⁵⁵⁾. Both these acts evidently reassured prospective testators it was becoming safer to leave bequests to the company. Thus from the mid-1330s at least 25 legacies were received annually.

Another factor which must have helped to encourage devotion and therefore legacies was the decision in 1336 to build a palace in the Piazza d'Or S. Michele, "in quo veneratio gloriose Virginis Marie posset aptius

celebrari", and at the same time provide a grain store in the upper floors⁵⁶). Three years later the Signoria laid down that for the further glorification of the Madonna each of the thirteen pilasters should be provided with a tabernacle, in which was placed an image of the titular saint of the Parte Guelfa and the twelve major guilds. On their feastdays the Consuls and representatives of the guilds were required to process to the piazza and make offerings of wax and money to Or S. Michele. The society was to spend the proceeds on subsidies to the poor⁵⁷). The importance of Or S. Michele at the centre of communal and corporate religious life was once more emphasized.

Less than a month later the captains, taking advantage of the company's favoured position, petitioned the Signoria for extra powers to deal with troublesome heirs, who "perseverant ad crescentem malitiam multorum". From now on, when somebody wished to contest Or S. Michele's right to a legacy, the heir had to deposit with the office of all the gabelles a sum equal to that involved. If the litigant lost the case the deposit was split equally between Or S. Michele and the Commune. But if the company lost it was not penalised. Heirs were thus discouraged from going to court unless they had an absolutely water-tight case⁵⁸). It was to stand the confraternity in good stead over the next ten years, because of the tendency for bequests to religious corporations to grow during crises⁵⁹).

3 The "decade of disaster", 1338 - 1348⁶⁰)

This was a period of increasing communal indebtedness, due principally to the expense of hiring mercenaries to wage war against the Scaligeri (1336 - 1338) and Lucca (1341 - 1343). The debt which Villani estimated had stood in 1339 at 450,000 florins⁶¹), continued to escalate during and after the Signoria of Walter of Brienne of 1342 - 43. His harsh rule was unpopular not least because he attempted to improve the Government's revenue by raising taxes. The gabelles on the gates, wine sold retail, and salt were all systematically exploited and

continued to be so even during the more popular regime which followed⁶²⁾.

But worse was to follow with the crash of two of Florence's largest banks, the Peruzzi and Bardi in 1343 and 1346 respectively⁶³⁾. Not only did individuals lose their deposits, but all sectors of trade and industry were affected by the dramatic reduction in credit. An already depressed economy was deflated still further between 1345 - 47 by the rise in the price of silver. This was to cut drastically the profits of the manufacturers and international merchants, for while they were paid by their foreign customers in gold, internal costs still had to be met in silver⁶⁴⁾.

Every level of society was affected by the slump, especially with the fall in the level of salaries⁶⁵⁾. The poor were the first to be affected, because such a high percentage of their income was spent on food. Further misery was created by the failure of harvests. In summer 1339, for example, the price of a stajo of grain rose to 20 soldi and within the year was at the unheard of figure of 50 soldi⁶⁶⁾. Once again the scenes in the Piazza d'Or S. Michele must have resembled the chaos so vividly described by the Biadaiuolo during the 1329 famine⁶⁷⁾. It is not clear what was the role of the company during these months. Although there was obviously a considerable amount of governmental control to ensure order was kept in the city, and particularly in the piazza of Or S. Michele, there is no evidence in any provvisioni that the Signoria used the company to distribute alms, as had been the case ten years earlier⁶⁸⁾. Perhaps the confraternity already had sufficient funds, as is suggested by the anonymous description of Florence which states that in 1339 it dispensed Lire 10,000 to the poor⁶⁹⁾.

As if famine conditions were not bad enough, the epidemic struck in

March 1340 and lasted until December. According to Villani, over 15,000 Florentines were buried in the city alone⁷⁰⁾. Or S. Michele benefitted considerably from the generosity of testators. Its income doubled⁷¹⁾, and it was left 138 bequests, which was more than the company had ever received in a single year. Moreover for the income to show such an immediate rise suggests that large payments were made in cash and that, as their statutes required, property was sold quickly⁷²⁾.

In 1341 the number of bequests given to the company more than halved. Income, on the other hand, only dropped by about a third, to L. 16,597, probably because the previous year's legacies were still being liquidated. Receipts from offerings at the shrine also remained high, possibly because the continuing grain shortage meant that there was still a large number of people in the Piazza⁷³⁾. Between June and August 1341, Lire 672 was left in offerte⁷⁴⁾. If one assumes for the moment that income from this source remained at the same level throughout the year, the company would have received Lire 946⁷⁵⁾. This figure was equivalent to 18 per cent of the company's total income, and suggests the continuing popularity of the Madonna among the Florentines, who thereby expressed their gratitude for the company's good works.

There are no more detailed records for the confraternity before 1347, and the figures for income and bequests (see Table 3) in the last six years are not entirely reliable since they are based upon incomplete data. This is particularly unfortunate because these years of political and economic disaster were obviously important in the company's development and a better understanding of them would help explain why the company was so favoured during the Black Death. However, from outside sources we know of one event which was to have some effect: the expulsion of the Duke of Athens on 26 July 1343. Villani tells

us that in future the event was to be celebrated as follows ⁷⁶⁾:

"s'ordinò per lo comune, che la festa di S. Anna
si guadasse come Pasqua sempre in Firenze, e si
celebrasse solenne uficio e grande offerta per
lo comune e per tutte l'arti di Firenze".

It was at Or S. Michele that the oblations were made, a logical choice since in 1339 it had been designated as the place where the guilds made their offerings on the feastdays of their patron saints ⁷⁷⁾. From 1344 therefore the confraternity had a new source of income. The proceeds were to be divided between the Convent of St. Anne and the poor of the city ⁷⁸⁾.

Once again Or S. Michele's importance was emphasized as a centre of the cult of the Madonna and a distributor of charity. But three years later the captains were complaining they had insufficient funds. Distribution of alms was delayed and even beginning to cease because heirs were still being troublesome: "propter dilationes, subterfugia et malitias ac impedimenta nolentium solvere". The solution proposed and enshrined in the law of 10 April 1347 was that the captains should be allowed to take disputed cases to independent arbiters whose decision would be final. The captains moreover, were given the power to oblige co-heirs to buy their part of the inheritance at a just price agreed between them and punish severely those not prepared to pay ⁷⁹⁾.

The company now had considerable powers of coercion which in conjunction with all its earlier privileges put it in a very strong position to deal with the avalanche of bequests in the following year. Two account books survive for 1347 which give us the chance to find out whether the flow of alms was ceasing, as the captains suggested in their petition to the Signoria. The first book records the company's expenditure for March - the month of the provvisione - and the second for June:

TABLE 5.3

Or S. Michele's expenditure in March and June 1347 (in Lire di piccioli)

Charity			Salaries		Masses		Festivals		Heirs		Misc.		TOTAL	
L.	%		L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%
March	612	41.3	102	6.9	5	0.3	41	2.8	88	5.9	635	42.8 ⁺	1483	100
June	1241	81.5	93	6	-	-	38	2.5	109	7	42	3	1523	100
TOTAL	1853	61.6	195	6.5	5	0.2	79	2.6	197	6.6	677	22.5	3006	100

Source: Or S. Michele 244, 245.

(+ This sum consists of 2 repayments of deposits totalling L. 635.)

Apparently, then, the captain's petition was at least partly justified. Although limosina in March had hardly ceased, it was only just over double the monthly sum which had been given to the poor during the winter of 1324 - 25. (cf. Table 1). This seems particularly low when taking into account that income had quadrupled over the previous 23 years (cf. Table 2). While a partial explanation may be that almost half the company's expenditure was used to repay quite substantial deposits⁸⁰⁾, the general economic depression must have reduced the company's income⁸¹⁾.

Since the mid-1320s all Or S. Michele's activities had expanded. The result can be seen from Table 3. First there was an increase in the salary bill, for the company now employed not just the laudesi and guardians of the oratory, but also the distributors of alms, and notaries and syndics who administered property and bequests. Festivals also involved more expense, for in addition to employing a festaiuolo and trumpeters, Or S. Michele bought a considerable amount of wax, wine and flowers⁸²⁾.

In line with the captains' wishes, as expressed in their petition of March, 1347, the poor benefitted most from the law. Between March and June the amount paid to the indigent doubled from

Lire 612 to Lire 1,241. This represented a vast increase over the Lire 1,032 which had been spent during the four months from October to January 1324 - 25. However, in order to appreciate the implications for the development of Or S. Michele, we must first consider the company's poor relief system and then the different types of pauper given aid.

4. Poor relief at Or S. Michele before the Black Death

The earliest details about Or S. Michele's charity are found in the statutes of 1294⁸³⁾. From these a more accurate idea of the company's activities emerge than from Giovanni Villani's description of its origins⁸⁴⁾. He suggested, for instance, that from the beginning the captains distributed Lire 6,000 annually to the poor, an impossibility until at least the late 1320s, since the company's total income did not reach that level before 1329. (See Table 2.) In that year the statutes were revised, as they were again four years later. Both redactions reveal a much more sophisticated administrative machinery designed to deal with considerable amounts of money⁸⁵⁾.

In 1294 devotion to the Virgin was regarded as the company's primary responsibility. But even if the charitable function did not figure prominently in these statutes, it was already recognised as a potentially important activity by the episcopal approbation of that year⁸⁶⁾. The only chapter of the statutes which mentions poor relief is the following⁸⁷⁾:

Li detti capitani che sieno per temporali, infra otto dì intrando nel loro officio, siano tenuti e debiano fare raunare il loro consillio, e dinanzi del detto consillio, proporre che via e che modo, e come elli debiano fare la limosina a' poveri ed a' religiosi ed a' spedali.

The captains were required to decide on their charitable programme within eight days of entering office. It is significant that at this stage, their policy seems to have been similar to the Commune's: to

concentrate on donating money to religious institutions, such as convents and hospitals, rather than giving personal subsidies to the poor. 88)

But within twelve years the company's organisation was beginning to change to cater for the needs of the poor. By 1306-1307 the captains were using the same system of poor relief, which one associates with their fully-fledged charitable programme. Officials were travelling through the city in order to select particularly bad cases of indigence, and record the names of the paupers in special registers.⁸⁹⁾

The majority of officials involved in Or S. Michele's charitable activities were unpaid; the duties were regarded as honorary as is still the case with the Misericordia. The actual procedure for distribution of alms is described in some detail in the 1333 statutes⁹⁰⁾. The ultimate responsibility for poor relief lay with the board of captains, who now met twice a week to discuss how best to spend the income⁹¹⁾. The Commune recognised the importance of their role by addressing its provvisioni to them, as in the law of 31 October 1329: "Quod camerarii camere Comunis Florentie debeant dare dominis Capitaneis certam quantitatem pecunie per ipsos Capitaneos distribuendam pauperibus".⁹²⁾

The first opportunity to study the effects of these changes on the company's finances is an account book of 1324-25. As can be seen from Table 5.1, up to 84.5 per cent of the total income went on charity. Extrapolating the evidence of these 17 weeks over a whole year, the company would have spent over Lire 3,000 in alms⁹³⁾. The way in which it was split between different categories of paupers will be studied in the following section.

4(1) . Anonymous Poor

Or S. Michele's account books for Autumn to Winter 1324-25 reveal that there were various ways the company gave assistance to the poor. The first was a weekly distribution from their shop, on the corner of the Piazza d'Or S. Michele and the Casolai degli Caligari⁹⁴⁾, to a crowd of anonymous beggars. The number of poveri a minuto, as they called them, was sometimes quite considerable. During October 1324, for example, there were over 100 on 13th, over 350 on 27th, and over 500 on 31st.⁹⁵⁾

Despite the size of the crowds, the amount given by the company was very little. On eight different occasions only Lire 13.5s.7d was distributed, and this sum was abnormally high because it included a subsidy of Lire 5.6s.0d for the Vigil of Ognissanti. On the same festival the poor also received a small meal. It cannot have been, however, any more than a symbolic gesture since the records indicate that the main constituent was a small quantity of bread. 10 soldi was spent which would have bought sixty-eight loaves weighing six and a half ounces each, and given no more than a slice to each of the 500 paupers.⁹⁶⁾

Evidently, then, each povero a minuto cannot have received any more than a very small contribution to his weekly budget. On one day, 27 October, the records specified the amounts as 3d for an adult and 1d for a child.⁹⁷⁾ This was minimal in comparison to the wages of the period, representing only 7.6 per cent of the daily wage of a gardener, one of the lowest paid workers⁹⁸⁾. These subsidies were also fairly insignificant in comparison to food purchases, which made up most of a pauper's expenditure. The staple of a poor Florentine's diet was bread and with his 3d he could expect to buy just less than two loaves which was hardly sufficient to keep alive an individual for a week, let alone his family.⁹⁹⁾ But, of course, this was not his only expense. For example, at every level of society,

wine was considered a necessity and so to a lesser extent was meat. Then finally one has to add the cost of clothing and housing, both of which became increasingly necessary as the winter drew on.¹⁰⁰⁾ Charles de La Roncière has taken all these expenses into account in order to estimate the monthly budget of a manual labourer in these years: it was 71s-1d for an individual and 177 soldi for a family of four.¹⁰¹⁾ Translating these into weekly terms they are about 17.8 soldi and 44.3 soldi, of which the 3d contribution from Or San Michele would have represented no more than 1.4 per cent and 0.6 per cent respectively.

Anonymous beggars could receive support in other ways. Some approached the captains directly as did these women on 24 October 1324:

"Denno a due bisogniose femine ala botegha dela
chonpangnia, poverissime ... soldi 4." ¹⁰²⁾

Members of the confraternity might also notice paupers as they travelled through the city on their way to give subsidies to the named poveri.¹⁰³⁾

The amount given to the anonymous poor was small when compared with the alms distributed to the company's regular clients. During the period from 1 October to 8 November 1324, the poveri a minuto received only 5.2 per cent of the total charity. But even so it was higher than the sums paid out in the next few months. Between 10 November and 27 January of the following year the poveri a minuto were given ~~£10~~ 19-14s-6d, which represented only 2.7 per cent of the total spent in alms.

It is difficult to explain the drop, especially as the records give less information for these months. Instead of phrases such as "a poveri assai piena la botegha dela detta compagnia"¹⁰⁴⁾, or

actual numbers being quoted, they simply wrote "a più poveri alla bottega" ¹⁰⁵⁾ or "a poveri a minuto" ¹⁰⁶⁾. Perhaps there were actually fewer paupers seeking aid since, as has been seen above, the amount given to some degree reflects the numbers present. But this seems odd when the problem of hunger remained, given that the price of grain stayed fairly constant over these months, at between 15-16 soldi per staio ¹⁰⁷⁾.

Instead the explanation may lie in a change of policy, to hand out smaller donations more frequently. While in the first five-week period the company made only seven distributions, in the following ten weeks there were twenty-three. Now instead of confining themselves to giving alms from the bottega, officials travelled around the city at least twice a week handing out each day between 5 and 6 soldi and occasionally up to 16 soldi ¹⁰⁸⁾. But none of these sums compare with the city-wide distribution to their own poor at Christmas, when they were given Lire 257.15s.Od ¹⁰⁹⁾. The latter may also help to explain the reduction in the amount given to the poveri a minuto: as money was limited it had to be saved for this important occasion.

The crowds of paupers who assembled regularly in front of the miraculous Madonna in the Piazza d'Or S. Michele therefore received very little, especially when the company's obligations to other types of poor relief became more pressing. Indeed the preference of the captains was always to favour people who were identified by name by the limosinieri as they travelled through the city.

4(ii) Named poor

The largest proportion of the company's charity was distributed by a system of tickets (polizze or scritte) given to individual paupers. The captains were therefore able to control rigorously who received their more substantial hand-outs. Selection was

necessary since not all the poor of Florence could be fed, especially in times of famine when the indigent came from the contado into the city in search for food¹¹⁰⁾.

A pauper first came to be registered with the company during the annual limosina generale of the city and contado. The captains fixed on the sum to be distributed and they chose a number of buoni huomeni e leali to carry it to their poor. These men toured the city in the company of the treasurers and messenger in order to choose families in particular need¹¹¹⁾. The heads of each family were required to sign a ticket on which was written their name, habitation and the reason they were given assistance. These polizze were then taken back to the company's office and copied into a register. The tickets themselves were kept in a box¹¹²⁾ in the same order in which they were entered into the book¹¹³⁾.

The statutes ordered that everybody had to be properly identified: "E non basti scrivere 'A una famiglia povera o vergognosa' o 'a cui dissono i capitani' o simili parole"¹¹⁴⁾. Instead a more precise description had to be employed such as the following¹¹⁵⁾:

"Demmo a Monna Dada moglie di Mastino, oste di Neri del Giudice, in parto, poverissima, nel popolo di San Michele di Vismomini".

Once registered the pauper did not have to wait until the next limosina generale, for officials travelled frequently around the city. He could also apply to the company's bottegha for a further subsidy, and might receive up to two or three payments of 5 soldi each in a four month period¹¹⁶⁾.

Alms were not distributed at random over the city. The company chose

those areas which had been settled within the previous 100 years to accomodate the expansion of the city's population. Thus over half in 1324-25 went to that section north of the Arno between the second and third walls: S. Ambrogio, S. Pier Maggiore, S. Lorenzo and S. Maria Novella. The other traditionally poor area, from S. Frediano to S. Felice in Piazza, received 17% of the charity. Moreover, in common with the Ospedale di S. Paolo, Or S. Michele gradually increased the subsidies to the Oltrarno¹¹⁷⁾.

An annual limosina was also conducted in the contado and district of Florence. Each group of captains set aside a certain quantity of money during their term of office, and chose one of the sesti of the contado to subsidise. Consequently four of the six sesti were covered every 12 months¹¹⁸⁾, although with the change to quarters in 1343 the whole contado came to be served in a year. The chance of fraud was greater in the country since there was less close supervision. The pauper therefore received his ticket from the notary, but only after it had been approved by the captains. Although individual payments to contadini who came personally to the bottegha were higher than to the Florentines - up to 10 soldi¹¹⁹⁾ - the total amount was considerably less. In October to January the captains gave 126 subsidies to the poor from the country and 1500 to those from the city¹²⁰⁾.

The situation became more complicated in times of famine since, as has been seen, the peasants came into town in search for food. In March 1347, for example, the company distributed 1079 separate payments to displaced contadini¹²¹⁾.

4(iii) Or S. Michele and the famine of 1347

The company split its charity in March and June 1347 between the poveri a minuto, the company's named paupers and members

of institutions:

TABLE 5.4

Breakdown of charity given by Or S. Michele,
March and June 1347 (in Lire di piccioli)

1347	Poveri a Minuto		Limosina per la città		Bread		Institutions		TOTAL	
	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%
March	66	11	455	74.4	3	0.5	88	14.4	612	100
June	111	8.9	839	67.6	278	22.4	14	1.1	1242	100

(Source: Or S. Michele 244, 245.)

The division of Or S. Michele's charitable funds in March had changed in one important respect since 1324 - 25. The poveri a minuto now received 11% instead of 5.2% of the budget.

The records of Or S. Michele do not give any idea of the numbers of poveri a minuto whom they subsidised in 1347, although the numbers of beggars in the piazza had obviously swollen enormously. Some indication can be gathered from Villani's description of the scene in the city only a few weeks later¹²²⁾:

E trovossi in mezzo Aprile nel 1347, che da 94,000 bocche erano, che n'aveano a dispensare per di; e di questo sapemmo il vero dal mastro ufficiale della piazza, che recevea le scritte e polizze ... e non contando i religiosi mendicanti e i poveri che viveano di limosine, ch'erano senza numero.

As Villani shows, the poor converged on the piazza of Or S. Michele and the mastro ufficiale was the man who officiated in the grain market and was responsible for handing out food to the crowds. It

is interesting to see that the Commune, too, made the same distinction between the named and anonymous paupers: the 94,000 who received the polizze and the others who were regarded as too many to be counted ("senza numero").

The company now made more effort to subsidise the poveri a minuto, handing out alms on an almost daily basis rather than just on Saturday evenings¹²³⁾. Distribution was not only from the bottegha, but included points throughout the city and contado. A captain from each quarter took it in turns to give alms in his area¹²⁴⁾, and most of this type of charity was destined for the paupers in the countryside, no accident since their condition was even worse than those of the city¹²⁵⁾. This explains why the additional sum of Lire 34 was distributed on the vigil of Easterday "negli alberghi di Borgho San Lorenzo dov'erano i poveri per la chonpangnia"¹²⁶⁾, suggesting that the poor had been assembled in particular houses to await the company's officials. If the amount an individual was given did not exceed the 3d of the earlier period¹²⁷⁾, the company would have subsidised a minimum of 2,700 people, and possibly many more if there were a large number of children present.¹²⁸⁾

The same bias towards the contado is apparent in the charity given to the named paupers, who received 74.4 per cent of the total alms. According to the 1333 statutes, the captains normally subsidised one section of the city or countryside during their term of office¹²⁹⁾. In Spring 1347 it was the turn of the quarter of S. Maria Novella, the region to the west of Florence towards Prato. Four separate trips were made between 13 and 28 March on which the officials spent Lire 230. Campi was singled out for special treatment for it was given an additional Lire 80, possibly in response to a particular need perceived by the company's visitors¹³⁰⁾. In addition a limosina was begun in another part of the contado, the quarter of S. Giovanni, which was given Lire 100¹³¹⁾. In both areas a considerable number of settlements

were covered: in the first half of the month 95 were represented and in the second it had more than doubled to 223¹³²⁾. In consequence only a fairly small proportion of the company's alms in March went directly to named paupers in the city: Lire 44.15s.10d compared with Lire 410 to the contado. In fact, institutions in Florence benefitted more, since 14 per cent of the total charitable budget went to hospitals or convents for their own needs. The friars of four Mendicant churches received Lire 37 as part of Or S. Michele's Easter limosina to convents¹³³⁾, which themselves had a tradition of hospitality and became places sought out by the poor in dire need. Poor members of institutions were also helped, as in the case of the bread handed out to the prisoners in the Stinche. The majority had been imprisoned because of debt and therefore at a time of scarcity found it even more difficult to feed themselves¹³⁴⁾.

The situation continued to deteriorate over the next few months; by May a staio of grain rose to the record figure of 1 florin¹³⁵⁾. The Commune then began to sell bread in addition to its traditional policy of providing grain. Ten ovens were set up on the Casolare de' Tedaldini¹³⁶⁾, and day and night were in operation cooking bread for distribution every morning throughout the city from churches and warehouses¹³⁷⁾. There was, though, no suggestion that Or S. Michele should distribute official funds as it had done in 1329. Instead by June the company had doubled the amount spent on alms; 81.5 per cent of its budget now went on charity.

All the main beneficiaries of Or S. Michele's poor relief in June benefitted from the increase except for institutions. In fact no convents received money; the Lire 14 was made up of a new type of direct subsidy to needy individuals in hospitals. The payments were either to women whom the company employed to carry the sick, or their own visitors who made a regular tour handing out small sums to patients. Many of these institutions may have been receiving poor who were weak from hunger or children who had been evicted from houses because of the lack of food¹³⁸⁾.

Or S. Michele had also increased the proportion of funds available for bread distribution to the crowds. In March bread had only been given to the paupers in the Stinche¹³⁹⁾. But by June a much larger quantity was handed out by the captains from their bottega¹⁴⁰⁾. Between 1 and 23 June 1347 the company bought 720 serque of grain at Lire 216, which would have made about 8,100 loaves at six and a half ounces each¹⁴¹⁾. If Or S. Michele gave two loaves per person, as was the practice of the Commune at the time¹⁴²⁾, about 4,000 mouths could have been fed in the first three weeks of June. The last distribution was on the 23rd, because the following day the price of grain dropped due to the early harvest¹⁴³⁾. But even in the early part of the month the company would only have catered for a small proportion of the total number of the hungry poor in Florence, assuming there is some veracity in Villani's assertion that in mid-April the Commune had given loaves to 94,000¹⁴⁴⁾.

Or S. Michele also continued to give money to the poveri a minuto, although it is difficult to determine the exact number aided since the records fail to give even approximate figures. However, if the Lire 111 was distributed according to established practice at 3d per adult, about 8,900 beggars would have received alms, and even more if children were present¹⁴⁵⁾. Lire 111 represents the largest amount given to the poveri a minuto and shows that, as in the case of the bread distribution, the sum given to them did increase as conditions worsened.

During the whole of June Or S. Michele gave out Lire 1,241 in charity. It was divided between the anonymous and named poor, who received Lire 389 and Lire 839 respectively. Although the records do not permit exact calculations of the number of paupers aided, a general idea can be given: about 6,600 poveri a minuto were given small sums of money, while another 4,000 were fed

with loaves of bread. Finally taking 4 soldi as the most popular subsidy to named paupers¹⁴⁶⁾, at least 3,356 people would have received aid under the polizza system. Therefore nearly 14,000 people would have been helped by the company in June 1347¹⁴⁷⁾.

5 . Conclusion

During Or S. Michele's first fifty years the company had increased the scale of all its charitable operations. In the 1290s subsidies were probably weighted towards religious bodies and hospitals¹⁴⁸⁾. The captains' concept of who constituted the poor was initially influenced by the Franciscan notion that the real "poveri di Cristo" were the voluntary poor such as themselves, rather than the indigent laity¹⁴⁹⁾. But during the first half of the Trecento the company gradually reduced the amount given to institutions, until by June 1347 they received only 1.1 percent of Or S. Michele's charity¹⁵⁰⁾.

Individual paupers were the ones to benefit most from the change of policy, especially between 1339 and the Black Death, when the general economic conditions, already discussed, meant lower wages and higher food prices for everybody¹⁵¹⁾. The charity books of the company for 1324 - 25 and 1347 suggest that the limosinieri were anxious to subsidise those who could least cope with these circumstances: widows, orphans, the infirm and old¹⁵²⁾.

These types of people coincide with many cases of indigence. But significantly, the majority of named paupers were women rather than men. In both October 1324 and March 1347, 66 per cent of the confraternity's charity went to women¹⁵³⁾. This need not

mean that Or S. Michele was indifferent to the plight of male wage-earners. They could have received alms through their wives, for the majority of these women were married and at least 40 per cent had children¹⁵⁴).

Another label frequently used by Or S. Michele to distinguish the poor was tenancy. In 1324-25 and 1347 between 42 and 65 per cent of the women and 40 to 51 per cent of the men were described as tenants. But it was not necessarily an attribute of poverty¹⁵⁵), so much as a description of their status. Renting a room or even staying as a guest of a friend or patron differentiated them from the poveri a minuto whose addresses were never given. It suggests that the captains' preference normally lay with the identified paupers rather than the anonymous crowds. In this way they could therefore select those individuals who were in a sense "respectably" poor, since they had a fixed location and were above the lowest level of poverty.

The effect of Or S. Michele's preoccupation with charity led, as has been seen, to a gradual expansion of its budget. The public showed its appreciation by leaving at the shrine a stream of oblations, which were supplemented over the years by an increasing number of bequests. This enabled the company to increase considerably its charity precisely at the time when the need was greatest. The Priors were also well aware of the service provided to the community and, with a series of provvisioni, sought to protect the company's interests against heirs seeking to defraud it of funds.

The Priors were also concerned to promote the worship of the Madonna, which, after all, had originally given rise to the confraternity. The decision in 1336 to build an oratory in the Piazza d'Or S. Michele emphasized the importance of the cult in the life of the

Commune. This was confirmed after the fall of the Duke of Athens by the establishment of the Feastday of St. Anne as a public holiday and its central feature as the procession to Or San Michele of the leading officials of the Government and guilds. In many ways it symbolised the role of the compagnia in the decade before the Black Death as one of the main religious centres of Florence. The Madonna which had begun by working miraculous cures now succoured the poor of the city.

1. Rivista Storica Italiana, XII, 1895, 401-418.
2. "Pauvres et pauvreté", 661-745.
3. "Poverty and Charity in Late-Medieval Florence" Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, 1983. I am grateful to Mr. Newton for allowing me to consult his thesis when it was still in draft form. (Page references may not correspond to the final version.) It will be obvious in what follows that I have benefitted considerably from reading his section on Or San Michele.
4. La compagnia d'Or San Michele ovvero una pagina della beneficenza in Toscana nel secolo XIV (Trani, 1902).
5. L. Passerini, Storia, 408.
6. La Sorsa, 10.
7. OSM (1294), prologue, 183.
8. La Sorsa, 190-191.
9. G. Villani, VII, 155.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Passerini, Storia, 436.
13. Villani, VII, 154.
14. Compagni, Cronica, III, 8 and Villani, VIII, 71.
15. La Sorsa, 21 and W. and E. Paatz, Die Kirchen von Florenz, IV, 480-6. In fact it was so damaged that a copy had to be made: N. R. Fabbri, N. Rutenburg, "The Tabernacle of Or San Michele in Context", The Art Bulletin, LXIII, 1981, 388.
16. For example the compagnia di S. Zanobi of S. Reparata: see their 1324 statutes in Compagnie Religiose Soppresse 2170, f 2v.
17. OSM (1294), cap. I, 183-184.
18. Cf C. del Corno, Giordano da Pisa e l'antica predicazione volgare (Florence, 1975), 48, 193, 256, 274, 279, 280, 395 and 472.
19. Prediche del Beato Fra Giordano da Rivalto Recitate in Firenze dal MCCCIII al MCCCVI, ed. A. Moreni (Florence, 1831), II, 239-250, esp. 241-2, 245.
20. OSM (1294), cap. III, 185, XV, 190.
21. Ibid., cap. IV, 185; cap. V, 186.
22. Ibid., cap. III, 185.
23. Ibid., cap. I, 184.

24. BNF, Magl., II.IV. 376, ff 315r - 317r: "Qui a piede si cominciano a scrivere che sieno corretti per gli rettori delle laude".
25. Prov. 22. vi. 1318: La Sorsa, 206. (Not in Prov. Req. 15.)
26. La Sorsa, 191-205, printed an incomplete version from ASF, OSM 474, now unavailable as it is flooded. However, we shall use the complete copy in Bibl. Mediceo-Laurenziana, Ashburnham, 1660.
27. OSM (1333), cap. I, f 3v.
28. Villani, VII, 155: "e crebbe tanto la fama de' detti miracoli e meriti di Nostra Donna che tutta Toscana vi veniva la gente in peregrinaggio per le feste di S. Maria".
29. OSM (1333), cap. XIV, f 10v.
30. Ibid., cap. XXIX, f 14v.
31. Ibid., cap. XXX, ff 14v-15r.
32. The reason given in the 1294 statutes for keeping the image of St. Michael covered: OSM (1294), cap. XIV, 150.
33. G. Pinto, Il Libro del Biadaiolo. Carestie e annona a Firenze dalla metà del '200 al 1348 (Florence, 1978), 352, plate 9.
34. G. Pinto, Il Libro, 16-17: The book was begun between 1339 and 1341 and the illumination was certainly painted before 1347.
35. For his duties see OSM (1333), cap. X, ff 9r-v.
36. See, for example, Ibid., cap. X, ff 8v-9r: "L'ufficio di coloro che stanno a piè dell'oratorio della imagine della nostra Donna".
37. Ibid., cap. XXII, f 12v.
38. Ibid., cap. XXVIII, ff 13v-14v.
39. OSM (1333), cap. XXVII, f 13v.
40. Ibid., cap. XXVII, f 13v.
41. Ibid., cap. XXXVII, ff 16r-v.
42. Knowing that a monthly due was 2d, (OSM (1333), cap. XX ff 11v-12r), it is possible to work out the number of people paying from the total amount collected in the subscription cash-box.

Dues received from members of Or San Michele: October 1324 to January 1325

Month	Amount received	No. of dues
October	29-15-3	3572
November	19- 8-8	2332
December	29-12-4	3552
January	24- 6-0	2916

Source: Or San Michele, 248, ff 1v-2r, 23r-v, 41r-42v.

43. Villani, VII, 155.
44. Ibid.
45. These totals omit the amount given to the treasurers by their predecessors. The sums are: L. 146 for October - November; none for November - December; L. 139 for December - January.
46. OSM (1333), cap. XX, ff 11v-12r, indicate that the money was kept in a cashbox kept underneath the Madonna.
47. OSM (1333), cap. XXII, f 12v.
48. Sources for Table 2: Wills: OSM 470 (Mostra 48) lists what we have assumed to be all the testaments between 1314 and 1346 which left money or land to Or San Michele. It is impossible to verify if this register is complete since all the other volumes dealing with the period are flooded: OSM 468, 469, 471, 475. Income: La Sorsa, 171-2, prints the figures contained in OSM 472, a list of officials with their entrata between 1291 and 1339. It cannot be verified since the MS is now flooded. It is unclear where he obtained the information for 1340-1346. Cf. the comments of Newton (186 ff).
49. Prov. of 22. VI. 1318, La Sorsa, 206. Some indication of the importance Or San Michele had attained by 1318 is that it was the only company to have received recognition; the other main ones had to wait for another eleven years: Prov. 30.iii, 1329: La Sorsa, 210-211. (Not in Prov. Reg. 25 under date.)
50. Prov. Reg. 15, f 76r: 29. X. 1329, La Sorsa, 211.
51. Ibid. , f 76r.
52. Prov. 20. VI. 1329, La Sorsa, 209-210. (Not in Prov. Reg. 25.)
53. See the descriptions in the Libro del Biadaiolo; for example for April 1329, Il Libro, 292-230.
54. Newton, 186-187. The budget for the Misericordia is unknown for this period since the records have not survived.
55. Prov. of 5. XII. 1331: La Sorsa, 212-213. (Not in Prov. Reg. 26.)
56. Prov. Reg. 27, f 86r: 25. IX. 1336: La Sorsa, 213.
57. Prov. Reg. 29, ff 2v-3v: 12. IV. 1339: La Sorsa, 214-215.
58. Prov. Reg. 29, ff 2v-3v: 4. V. 1339 : La Sorsa, 215-218.
59. Charles M. de La Roncière, Florence, centre économique régional au XIVe siècle (Aix-en-Provence, 1976), II, 707-708
60. G. A. Brucker, Florentine Politics and Society, 1343-1378. (Princeton, 1962) 4. For what follows see B. Barbadoro, Le finanze della Repubblica Fiorentina (Florence 1929); R. Barducci, "Politica e speculazione finanziaria a Firenze dopo la crisi del primo Trecento (1343-1358)", A.S.I., CXXXVII (1979), 177-219; C. Cipolla, Il fiorino e il quattrino. La politica monetaria a Firenze nel 1300 (Bologna 1982).

61. Villani, XI, 45.
62. De La Roncière, Florence, centre économique, I, 151-170.
63. C. Cipolla, Il fiorino e il quattrino, 13-17.
64. Ibid., 32-36.
65. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 673, 680-681 for wages of gardeners at S. Maria Nuova and masons. Cf. also R. A. Goldthwaite, The Building of Renaissance Florence, 436-438.
66. Villani, XI, 100; cf. the prices in Pinto, Il Libro, 63-70 and 95 n105.
67. In 1329 the price of grain did not quite reach the level of 1339/40. The highest was 45.7 soldi a staio in June 1329: Pinto, 67.
68. Prov. Reg. 29, 30 and 31.
69. Anon Descriptio Urbis Florentie in C. Frey, Die Loggia dei Lanzi zu Florenz (Berlin, 1885), 191.
70. Villani, XI, 114.
71. Cf Table 5.2.
72. OSM (1333), cap. VII, f 7v. Also noted by Anon Descriptio, 191.
73. Pinto, Il Libro, 100. It will be remembered that in 1324, also a year after a shortage of grain, the company's single largest source of income was from offerte. See Table I.
74. OSM, 145, ff 13r, 34r, and 45r: 8. VI to 30 .VIII 1341.
75. The period 8.VI - 30.VIII.1341 amounted to 83 days or 11.86 weeks.
76. Villani, XII, 17.
77. Prov. Reg. 29, ff 2v-3v: 12.iv.1339: La Sorsa, 214-215.
78. Prov. Reg. II.1.1344: La Sorsa, 218-220. (Not in Prov. Reg. 32 under date.)
79. Prov. Reg. 34, ff 121v-122r: 10.IV.1347: La Sorsa, 220-223.
80. Leaving deposits with religious institutions was a common practice. See Newton on the Ospedale di S. Paolo which paid a flat 8 per cent interest: pp. 114-121. It is hardly surprising that people withdrew their deposits at a time of financial crisis. Payments to the depositors were, however, made in gold rather than silver: 145 fiorini d'oro; 53 fiorini d'oro and L. 30-13s-7d.
81. C. Cipolla, Il fiorino e il quattrino, 23-28.
82. OSM 244, ff 51r-53v; OSM 245, ff 70r-75r.
83. OSM 476: now unavailable through flooding, but published by La Sorsa, 183-191. The MS also contains their 1297 statutes which he did not transcribe.
84. Villani, VII, 155.

85. Cf. 1329 statutes in Bibl. Riccardiana, MS Miscellaneo 391; it was no coincidence they were revised in this year of famine when the company received a series of privileges from the Commune.
86. La Sorsa, 190. The Archbishop mentions the role of the society in giving aid to "Christi pauperum, religiosorum, ospitalium, et personarum miserabilium".
87. OSM (1294), . Cap. VII, 187.
88. Davidsohn, Storia V, 326 refers to a provvisione of 1289, which fixed the annual sum of L. 2,000 for distribution to hospitals and monastic institutions. Perhaps these donations may help to explain the lessening of the Mendicants' opposition to Or San Michele
89. G. Richa, Notizie istoriche delle chiese fiorentine (Florence, 1754-68), I, 13, mentioned that he had consulted two limosina books then in the possession of D. M. Manni. I have been unable to trace them in any of the Florentine libraries or archives.
90. Outlined in La Sorsa, 29-30 and De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 691, but worth repeating in greater detail with the addition of the information from the unpublished 1333 statutes in the Mediceo-Laurenziana.
91. OSM (1333), cap. IV, f 5v.
92. La Sorsa, 210.
93. Given that the average annual income of 1324-25 was L.4,208 (cf. Table 2), at least 74 per cent of the company's entrata would have gone on charity.
94. F. Sznura, L'espansione urbana di Firenze nel Duecento (Florence, 1975), 30-33, explains the term "casolare".
95. OSM 248, ff 11v, 17v and 18v-19r.
96. Ibid., ff 18v-19r: "Al Porcellana demmo aiuto la vi[gi]lia d'Ogniesanti ad uno desinare che fecie a poveri lo die d'Ogniesanti: 10s". 10 soldi would have bought 0.75 staio of grain at 15s a staio (Goldthwaite, "I prezzi", 32) and made c. 67.5 loaves of bread of six and a half ounces each. (Pinto, Il Libro, 386 n.2, calculated that about 90 loaves could be made from 1 staio.)
97. OSM 248, f 17v: 27 October 1324.
98. The average daily wage in 1326-1332 was 3.3 soldi: De La Roncière "Pauvres et pauvreté", 673.
99. See n. 96: loaves cost 2d each.
100. De La Roncière, Florence, Centre, 404-406, 408, 410-12.
101. Ibid., 413

102. OSM 248, f 15v.
103. For example OSM 248, f 11v: 16 October 1324.
104. Ibid., f 7v.
105. Ibid., f 33v.
106. Ibid., f 43v.
107. Pinto, Il Libro, 218-219.
108. For example, OSM 248, f 35v: "a più poveri andando per Firenze sol. XVII".
109. Ibid., ff 42r-v.
110. See G. Pinto, "Firenze e la carestia del 1346-47. Aspetti e problemi delle crisi annonarie alla metà del '300," A.S.I. CXXX, 1972, 50-54.
111. OSM (1333), cap. VI, ff 6r-v.
112. OSM 248, f 21v: "una chasetta per tenere iventro tut[t]e ischrit[t]e de' poveri sol. V".
113. OSM (1333), cap. VI, f 7r.
114. Ibid.
115. OSM 248, f 5r: 1.X.1324.
116. I.e. October 1324 to January 1325: De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 691 n55. For size of subsidies see Ibid., 717.
117. For a detailed discussion of the geographical distribution of these two organisations' limosina in the first half of the Trecento see: Newton, 130-140 and Charts 10 and 11.
118. OSM (1333), cap. XXIV, f 13r.
119. Ibid., cap VI, ff 6r-7v.
120. Del La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 718.
121. Ibid., 719.
122. Villani, XII, 73.
123. OSM 244 records for every day except for March 1-4, 15 and 18.
124. For example on 16 March: "per la terra con Bartolo Mannucci Lire 2-16s-0d". Mannucci was one of the captains for the quarter of S. Maria Novella.
125. See Pinto, "Firenze e la carestia del 1346-47", 49-52.
126. OSM 244, f 46v.

127. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 715.
128. Cf. OSM 248, f 17v; children received only 1d.
129. ~~OSM~~ (1333), cap. XXIV, f 13r.
130. 28 March: "per fare limosina a poveri del chomune di Campi Lire 80".
131. Ibid., f 49r; Borgo San Lorenzo, which had received the extra subsidy for the anonymous poor, was also in the same quarter.
132. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 671.
133. OSM (1333), cap. XXV, f 13r.
134. OSM 244: "A prigion[er]i poveri delle Stinche 220 pani .. Lire 3-3s-4d".
135. Villani, XII, 73.
136. Cf. F. Sznura, L'espansione urbana di Firenze nel Dugento, 57, n. 62.
137. Villani, XII, 73.
138. OSM 245, under 9 June for example: "Al Ospedale dela Schala per ricevere un fanciullo gittato sol. 5; ala Giovanna che portò il detto fanciullo sol. 1-7d."
139. 120 loaves weekly: OSM 245, ff 66r-67r.
140. OSM 245: f 66r on 1 June: "A Ulivieri di Vanni nostro uficiale per chonperare tanta serque di pane per mandare a chasa de' chapitani chel dieno a poveri per danari sei l'uno. Monta per due di Lire 24.
141. It has been calculated that a serqua of grain will make 11.25 loaves: Pinto, Il Libro, 386 n2. See above, n.96.
142. Villani, XII, 73: "e aveano per bocca due pani il di per danari 4 l'uno".
143. Villani XII, 73. La Sorsa, 92 (followed by De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 716) is therefore wrong in (a) his calculations of "770 serque del valore di quasi 240 libbre" and (b) in extrapolating from the example of June over the whole year, suggesting that they distributed over 100,000 loaves at not less than Lire 2,500. As has been seen, June was exceptional, even in comparison with March, when near famine conditions prevailed, and the company immediately stopped handing out bread when grain became cheaper.
144. Villani, XII, 73: "e di questo sapemmo il vero dal mastro uficiale della piazza, che ricevea le scritte e polizze".
145. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 715, states that Lire 96 was distributed, although it is not clear how he arrived at this figure.

146. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 718: 40 per cent of all donations in March 1347 were 5 soldi.
147. Ibid., 715.
148. Suggested by the phraseology of the 1294 statutes: La Sorsa, 187: cap.VII.
149. For a general treatment of the theme see M. Mollat, Les pauvres au Moyen Age. Étude sociale (Paris, 1979), 147-164. But more specifically on Florence there are the studies of Charles de La Roncière, "L'Eglise et la pauvreté à Florence au XIVe siècle", La pauvreté des sociétés de pénurie à la société d'abondance (Paris 1964), 47-66, which is amplified in his above-cited "Pauvres et pauvreté" 687-690, 703-707, 725-734. Most recently see J. Newton's introductory chapters to "Poverty and charity in late-medieval Florence".
150. Cf. Table 4.
151. Even the master masons employed at S. Maria Nuova were affected badly if they were trying to support a family (De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 683). Rent was the only element of an individual's budget which dropped during the eight years before the Black Death. A. Saponi, "Case e botteghe a Firenze nel Trecento", Studi di storia economica medioevale, II. (Florence 1946), 324-325. Cf. also Goldthwaite, The Building, 343.
152. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 687, 692-694.
153. Ibid., 691.
154. Ibid., 692, 694, categorises the types of indigents aided by Or San Michele, although he makes no attempt to distinguish between the women who were married and those who were spinsters.
155. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 693-694.

CHAPTER 6

The Company of Or S. Michele
From the Black Death to 1359

1 Introduction

The decade following the Black Death was a period of relative peace and prosperity in Florence. In 1350 the Government had relaxed the restrictive measures, which had been taken two years earlier to reduce the number of lower guilds from fourteen to seven¹⁾. Moreover, while the Albizzi and Ricci factions continued to fight over the dominant position in the Councils, the prevailing theme of these years was the maintenance of internal harmony²⁾. The economy was also recovering from the deflationary spiral, which had characterized the 1340s. The reduction of the population by about a third had had an immediate effect: per capita wealth increased and labour became more scarce. There were therefore higher wages, especially for the skilled. However, one should beware of painting too glowing a picture, because the plague returned in subsequent decades and poverty was not eradicated; certain sections of the community continued to face real hardship, except perhaps in the period from 1361 to 1368³⁾.

Peace within the city was necessary if the Florentines were to organise themselves properly in the face of the belligerence of the Visconti. The two powers were at war for most of the decade. Between 1350 and 1353 Florence bore the main brunt of the Milanese threat⁴⁾, but during the subsequent six years she joined forces with Cardinal Albornoz in his efforts to establish a strong papal state against the opposition of the Visconti⁵⁾. The result of all this military activity was to drain the communal treasury, which was already much depleted after the depression of the 1340s and the devastation of the Black Death⁶⁾. In its search for funds, the Government imposed a series of indirect taxes, or gabelles, and these were followed by the 1352 and 1355 Libro della Segna, which attempted to revive the principle of direct taxation of the city⁷⁾.

Within this context one can appreciate the attraction to the Commune of an organisation, such as Or S. Michele, which is supposed to have inherited over 350,000 florins⁸⁾. The source for this figure is Matteo Villani⁹⁾, whose account of what happened to the company during and immediately after the Black Death¹⁰⁾ has influenced all historians who have written about the period¹¹⁾. They tend to repeat in particular his accusations against the captains. The latter are supposed to have been corrupted by the company's newly found wealth, keeping the best property for themselves while distributing large amounts of charity to friends and accepting bribes from people who wished to succeed them in office.

To assess the accuracy of Villani's account, we will look first at Or S. Michele's relations with the Government in the 1350s, then the company's finances and finally its charitable activities. In this way we will see how each aspect of the confraternity's life had been changed by its new-found affluence.

2 Or S. Michele and the Florentine Government, 1348 to 1359.

Even if the nominal value of Or S. Michele's inheritance was 350,000 florins, the company did not necessarily receive all the property and money represented by this sum. Indeed the opposition which the captains had already encountered from co-heirs during the 1340s¹²⁾ suggests the difficulties in realising the full value of bequests. The captains, therefore, had once again to petition the Priors of the Commune to protect their interests. The result was that a series of provisions was passed between April and August 1348 to strengthen the confraternity's legal position.

The laws in April and May dealt with a number of important problems. The first had arisen when Or S. Michele inherited estates already deeply in debt. The solution proposed was to give the company permission to disclaim liability for debts exceeding the assets, by requiring an inventory to be taken before accepting the inheritance¹³⁾. But there was no point having rights if they could not be enforced. Therefore in May the powers granted to the company in the previous year were extended¹⁴⁾. The summons of Or S. Michele's captains was now given the force of law by invoking the support of communal officials, and demanding the arrest of obstinate heirs. Other problems which had arisen before, but had not been entirely resolved, were over the sale of company assets. Consequently in May 1348 Or S. Michele was given the right to alienate property, "iure proprio et in perpetuum", at a just price agreed between the parties¹⁵⁾.

Or S. Michele was encountering fresh difficulties by August, because of the vast number of bequests it had received. The law of 13th sought to overcome some of the main stumbling-blocks, which prevented the confraternity from obtaining its inheritance. The captains were first given the power to act as executor of a will of which the company had been made only a minor beneficiary

and the principal heir was either dead or under age. Secondly the Priors declared valid any testament drawn up since March 1348, which had not been properly notarised or lacked the correct number of witnesses. In order to give these acts the force of law, the captains had permission to elect a "probum et sapientem virum forensem", who was invested with the same authority as the Podestà, the highest judicial official of the State¹⁶⁾.

Or S. Michele was now in a very strong position, because the captains were able to accept bequests from imperfectly drawn-up wills, and enforce the company's rights against obstructive heirs. But there are indications that these privileges were not achieved without some cost. A provision of 13 November 1348¹⁷⁾ stipulated that the captains were to hand over to the Commune all houses, land or immobile goods which the company had been left during the past two years or was likely to have in the future as a result of wills made in that period. These items were then to be sold at a price agreed with the Commune's syndics. The proceeds were to go partly to those two sections of the community which, we shall see later, were regarded as being among the worst hit by the plague: widows and orphans. The rest was to be used to provide a loan to the Government, which in return provided the company with shares in the public debt, the Monte Comune to the value of the capital appropriated¹⁸⁾.

The Priors, however, did not take this move without some formal justification¹⁹⁾:

considerantes quod distributio relictorum Sotietati Sancte Marie S. Michaelis in Orto fieri non posset utiliter pauperibus et piis locis extra voluntates et dispositiones eorum, qui huiusmodi relictata fecerunt. Et quod propter multas et varias expensas que occurrunt ...diminuerentur redditus... Et ne devotio civium et districtualium ac etiam aliorum de circumstantibus partibus, ex inordinatione nimia, que viguit et viget iudicio plurimorum in factis Sotietatis predictis tepescat...

Although this passage echoes Villani's criticisms of the captains' maladministration of charity²⁰⁾, it does not provide any more definite proof that the captains were dishonest in alms-giving. The chronicler and the Priors may simply have been repeating the same rumours.

The other area in which Villani had accused the captains of corruption was over the elections. He suggested that they had manipulated the procedure to ensure that successors were drawn from their own circle of friends. However, one cannot establish the veracity of these assertions any more than those concerning the misdirection of charitable funds. Moreover, the Priors themselves had condoned electoral irregularities. A provvisione of December 1348 had recognised the impossibility of following the procedure laid down by the company statutes "propter fortunatum et pericolosum tempus et diversa et varia accidentia"²¹⁾.

One should also remember that the Priors had everything to gain from a compliant board of captains if they wanted to obtain loans from the company. Indeed a law of the previous November had marked the beginning of a series of provisions, which brought the company under closer official supervision. The Government laid down that in future the communal Councils were to "provide" for the election of the captains²²⁾, although what this meant in practice did not emerge immediately. Laws which were passed over the following four years established that the captains were to be elected by the Consiglio del Popolo²³⁾, then that half of them should be drawn from among the members of the Consiglio²⁴⁾, and finally that elections should be conducted by secret scrutiny²⁵⁾. In this way the Priors ensured that at least half of the board would fulfill their wishes and that elections could be conducted in greater freedom.

Taking these laws in conjunction with Villani's comments²⁶⁾, one can begin to appreciate what had happened to Or S. Michele during the nine-month period after the beginning of the plague in April. The sums inherited by the company were large enough to attract a government which was in very short supply of money. Invoking the excuse that the company's traditional clientele- the very poor- had died during the plague and that the administration of charity was in disarray²⁷⁾, a series of laws were passed to bind the confraternity closer to the Signoria. When in May 1348 the captains of the company had called upon the support of the Podestà²⁸⁾, they did not reflect that reliance upon such a powerful official might backfire. Six months later it became clear how the Commune could benefit from the move: by using the excuse that Or S. Michele needed drastic reorganisation, the Priors demanded substantial loans and directed the company's cash for construction projects of its own devising.

The law in November 1348 was the first indication that the Priors were seeking to benefit from Or S. Michele's wealth. But neither the financial records of the company or Commune are sufficiently complete to determine how much property the captains had supplied to the Government's syndics²⁹⁾. Evidence that the State had appropriated part of Or S. Michele's assets is provided by the archive of the Monte Commune; seven years after the Black Death the confraternity was still the largest single shareholder in the funded debt with holdings worth 12,000 florins³⁰⁾. However, despite official intervention the company, as we shall see in the next section, was not reduced to penury. In May 1349 it could afford to provide a loan of 15,000 florins³¹⁾, the first half of which was paid in the following month³²⁾. Repayments were to be made to Or S. Michele from the gabelle on wine sold retail, which after the Black Death was one of the indirect taxes with the highest yields³³⁾.

The company's account books confirm that the Government honoured its obligations, as far as the loan was concerned³⁴⁾, and gave

Or S. Michele the same guarantees as a shareholder in the Monte Comune³⁵⁾. Two years after the original loan was requested the confraternity was asked for another 2135 florins³⁶⁾, at a time of renewed preparations for war against the Visconti. It was one of a series of measures taken to raise cash, including the doubling of communal taxes³⁷⁾.

On the surface, then, the Government had been quite straightforward with Or S. Michele. Matteo Villani's suggestion that the Priors had confiscated part of the company's assets does not appear to be substantiated from surviving communal records. If the captains had handed over the property to the Commune, as the law of November 1348 demanded, there would have been no reason for Or S. Michele to have made further loans.

The sums lent to the Commune between the summers of 1349 and 1351 amounted to 9635 florins. The size of the loan can be well appreciated by comparing it with the Commune's income from the gabelle on wine sold retail³⁸⁾. The amount borrowed was equivalent to Lire 30,350, which was only just less than a third of the average receipts in each semester³⁹⁾.

The following year, 1352, Florence was still at war with the Visconti and took further steps to obtain money from Or S. Michele. On 9 March a new law laid down that anyone who owed money to the company would be impelled to pay by a "public official" appointed by the Priors. In the first instance the amount raised was to be used for underwriting Or S. Michele's "urgent necessities" and in subsidising the poor, while the rest was lent to the communal treasury. As in early years, the repayment was to be made from indirect taxes⁴⁰⁾.

During these years the Priors also channelled Or S. Michele's capital into building projects. Most important was the decision on 20 July 1349 to build on the Piazza of Or S. Michele "unam pulcram et honorabilem ecclesiam vel cappellam ad honorem et reverentiam Beate sancte Anne, propitie et fautricis Civitatis

Florentie"⁴¹⁾. The company was instructed to pay 3000 florins towards the building costs and 50-60 florins for the stipend of the rector⁴²⁾. The site chosen for the church was appropriate since the Festival of St. Anne had been celebrated there since 1345. Undoubtedly this placed new emphasis on the role of both the piazza and the confraternity in the city's religious life.

Taking all these loans together, a total of 13,368 florins was borrowed over four years, which was only 1,632 florins less than the amount envisaged by the communal councils in May 1349. Adding the 4000 florins appropriated for the construction of St. Anne, the whole sum represents 5 percent of the 350,000 florins which Villani said had been left to Or S. Michele after the Black Death. But in order to appreciate how these large transfers of money affected Or S. Michele, we must turn to examine the company's finances.

3 The finances of Or S. Michele, 1349 to 1359.

The first extant account book after the Black Death is a libro dell'uscita which covers parts of February and March 1349. Although the periods are short, the information provided does enable one to gain some idea of the impact of the plague on the company's expenditure, especially bearing in mind that the treasurers had few reserves on which to draw:

TABLE 6.1 Expenditure of Or S. Michele, 19-28.ii, 2-18.iii.1349
(in Lire di piccioli)

Period	Charity		Salaries		Masses		Festivals		Heirs		Misc.		Total	
	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%
19-28.ii	221	3.4	65	1	-	-	-	-	6267	95.4	14	0.2	6567	100
2-18.iii	336	5	471	7.2	-	-	27	0.4	5732	87.1	15	0.2	6581	100

(Source: OSM 246)

In just over ten days of February 1349 the confraternity had spent Lire 6567 or roughly Lire 730 per day, and in sixteen days of March Lire 6581 or Lire 411 a day. These sums were ten times the amount which had been expended only two years earlier⁴³⁾, when the captains were complaining that they were short of revenue⁴⁴⁾. However, in the interim Or S. Michele's hand had been strengthened so that by 1349 the company's officials did not need to fight as many cases to recover its rightful possessions.

The account book of Spring 1349 also indicates that although the company may have been nominally affluent, testators also required the captains to distribute large sums to individuals and corporations. From Table 1 we can see that from 87.1 percent to 94.5 percent of the company's expenditure was paid to heirs.

Apart from money paid out under the terms of bequests, the major expenses were salaries and charity. The amount spent on the former had grown six times since 1347⁴⁵⁾. The reason was not just the rise in the number of employees, but also the increase in the level of wages after the Black Death⁴⁶⁾. Expenditure on charity, on the other hand, was no higher than the level of two years earlier, when the captains had complained to the Priors that the company's income was so reduced that the traditional charitable programme could no longer be afforded⁴⁷⁾. We shall see, however, that twenty months later this picture had changed. While in Spring 1349 the company had been concerned to meet its obligations to heirs before giving money to paupers, by the next surviving Libro dell'uscita of November 1350, expenditure on the poor was three times that to heirs. (See Table 4).

More of Or S. Michele's account books survive for the 1350s than for any other decade, so that a slightly more complete picture emerges of the company's activities⁴⁸⁾. The following table summarises three short libri del entrata from 1350:

TABLE 6.2 Or S. Michele's income in 1350 (in Lire di piccioli)

Period	Heirs		Candles		Masses		Oblations		Property (i)		Commune (ii)		Misc. (iii)		Total	
	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%
18.i-26.ii	3134	41.3	260	3.4	54	0.7	49	0.6	279	3.7	3100	41	714	9.4	7590 (iv)	100
6.iv-30.vii	8646	80.7	327	3	-	-	-	-	82	0.8	1500	14.5	113	1	10,718	100
1.xii-26.xii	4255	65.1	-	-	-	-	702	10.7	32	0.5	1550	23.7	-	-	6539	100

- (i) Money received from sale of property and rent.
- (ii) Interest on loan to Government.
- (iii) Unspecified income and small miscellaneous sums.
- (iv) This excludes Lire 4480 received from the retiring treasurers.

(Source: OSM 219, 250, 251ter.)

The period covered by each of these account books in 1350 varies, as does the information provided. The first, which is the most complete, dates from shortly after the company had lent the Commune 7500 florins. This sum was very large in comparison to Or S. Michele's finances before the Black Death, but in 1350 was only three times the company's income for five weeks⁴⁹⁾.

Two elements of the table which throw light on the vitality of the cult of the Madonna are the sale of candles and the receipts from oblations. Both demonstrate clearly that devotion was still flourishing in 1350, despite the cavills of Matteo Villani⁵⁰⁾. Each candle sold or coin received represented an act of devotion either by the captains or members at the daily services, guildsmen on their patron's feastday, or the public worshippers at the shrine.

Legacies, however, formed the single largest source of income, ranging from 41 to 80.7 percent of the total. The daily average of receipts from bequests in the three periods was about Lire 182, so that if the same rate was maintained throughout the year the annual income from this source would have been in the region of Lire 66,509⁵¹⁾. One can thus begin to appreciate why Or S. Michele could afford to make such sizeable loans, pay for the normal running of the company, and subsidise construction work.

Another account book from a couple of years later indicates how the confraternity's income from bequests was constituted:

TABLE 6.3 Or S. Michele's income from bequests, 1-28.ii.1352 (in Lire di piccioli)

Period	Heirs		Property sold		Rent		Sale of produce		Misc.		Total	
	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%
1-28.ii	966	33.6	1320	46	105	3.7	259	9	222	7.7	2872	100

(Source: OSM 251 ter.)

The single largest item (46 percent) was from the sale of property, which had been inherited during the Black Death, confirming that it took a long time to liquidate assets. Delays had presumably been caused by litigious heirs and the difficulty of selling land in a sluggish land market. However, not all heirs contested the right of Or S. Michele, because they still provided 33.6 percent of the company's income.

A libro dell'uscita from November 1350 gives some idea how this income was spent:

TABLE 6.4 Or S. Michele's expenditure, 3-27.xi.1350 (in Lire di piccioli)

Period	Charity		Salaries		Commem. masses		Festivals & wax		Heirs		Oratory		University		Misc.		Total	
	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%
3-27.xi.1350	6042	50	532	4.4	-	-	-	-	1894	15.7	298	2.4	3100	26.5	117	1	12083	10

Expenditure was still as high as in the Spring of 1349, with a daily average of Lire 499⁵²⁾. However, there was a difference in the way in which money was spent. In February and March 1349 up to 95 percent had gone to heirs, whereas in November 1350 they only received 15.8 percent. The greatest beneficiaries were the paupers, for alms now represented 50 percent of expenses instead of only 5 percent. The majority of payments were to girls for dowries. This partly reflects the preoccupation of the Priors of the Commune whose law of November 1348 had instructed the captains of Or S. Michele to spend more on dowries⁵³⁾, and partly the wishes of testators who had left money to be paid to the daughters of poor relatives.

Construction work was another high cost in the early 1350s. The Commune, as we have seen, had ordered the company to give a substantial sum towards the building of the church of St. Anne, and then in November 1350 another subsidy was demanded for the new University, which was being established in Florence⁵⁴⁾.

Or S. Michele was also involved in paying for part of the oratory and all of the tabernacle. The confraternity paid 80 florins in November towards the cost of completing the vaults⁵⁵⁾.

But what is not entirely clear is why the company should have been paying anything when revenue from two gabelles had been assigned by the Government for the construction of the oratory. The answer may lie partly at least in the Arte della Seta's petition of March 1350, in which the Consuls complained that these traditional sources of income had dried up and that there were now insufficient funds to finish the work⁵⁶⁾. The company may have contributed so that work could begin on the tabernacle, for without a roof it would have been ruined. More information about Orcagna's project is found in an account book of 1352-57, which despite its title of Entrata e Uscita del Oratorio recorded mostly the income and expenditure for constructing the tabernacle. (See Table 6.5.)

TABLE 6.5 Expenditure from tabernacle fund, 1352-1357 (in lire di piccioli)

Period	Charity		Tabernacle		Candles		Salaries		Festivals		Anon. + misc. (1)		Total	
	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%
1352 vi-xii	750	18	3409	82	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4159	100
1353-54	1022	12.6	5444	67	1648	20.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	8114	100
1355	260	5.1	2345	47	1592	31.9	19	0.4	-	-	776	15.6	4992	100
1356	125	1.8	4475	65.2	1579	23	173	2.5	199	2.9	319	4.6	6870	100
1357 i-vi	-	-	1869	50	1192	31.7	54	1.4	68	1.8	573	15.3	3756	100
Total	2157	7.73	17542	62.9	6011	21.6	246	0.9	267	1	1668	6	27,891	100

(1) Includes unspecified expenses, the repayment of loans, expenditure for the company's hospital at Montelupo.

(Source: OSM 253)

We do not know when the tabernacle was started, although it was planned from at least as early as November 1350⁵⁷⁾. The account book itself begins two years later, and the first payment for this project was made on 3 July 1352⁵⁸⁾. Another indistinct area is the total amount which was spent on the tabernacle. As Table 6 reveals, an average of only 62 percent of the income recorded here went on the tabernacle. The maximum in any one year was Lire 4475. This was fairly low when compared with the receipts from legacies in the early 1350s, which had been as high as Lire 7500 per month⁵⁹⁾. How, then, does one reconcile these figures with the sum of 86,000 florins, which a series of historians maintain was paid for the tabernacle's construction? ⁶⁰⁾ The first thing to be noted is that the source for this enormous sum was Ghiberti, who was writing a century later and presumably relied on hearsay⁶¹⁾. Secondly while our account book covers most of the period during which the tabernacle was being constructed- it was completed in 1359⁶²⁾ - neither the beginning nor the end of the project falls within the span of this record. Orcagna may have been given substantial sums when he started and completed his work, but even so it seems unlikely that the amount which Ghiberti suggests could have been spent.

Money from this account also went on buying the candles sold at the shrine, paying the salaries of the attendants, subsidising the confraternity's hospital at Montelupo, but nothing was given to heirs since they were paid from a different source. The most unexpected payment was on alms, although why the tabernacle fund was used is not clear, since the Commune had stipulated that the company's charity should be underwritten by money from the sale of property. However, Or S. Michele only used regularly this source to underwrite the monthly limosina per la città between the summers of 1352 and 1353⁶³⁾. Money was probably diverted temporarily from the tabernacle to give to the poor,

because these years saw the first recurrence of really bad conditions after the Black Death⁶⁴⁾.

The amount which could be spent on the tabernacle itself was determined by which sources were assigned for the project. The syndic, Matteo Ugguccione, who was responsible for keeping the accounts, described the income as being made up of three main elements: interest from the company's Monte de'Prestanzoni shares, the cash from candle-sales, and the public's oblations⁶⁵⁾ (see Table 6.6):

TABLE 6.6 Income from the tabernacle fund, 1352-1357 (in lire di piccioli)

Period	Monte de' Prestanzoni		Oblations		Candles		Bequests		Debtors		Misc. (1)		Total	
	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%
<u>1352</u> <u>iv-xii</u>	1427	53											2706	100
<u>vi-x</u>			1279	47										
<u>1353</u> <u>i-iv</u>	640	21	1380	45										
<u>viii-xii</u>					970	32					68	2	3058	100
<u>1354</u>					4269	91					420	9	4689	100
<u>1355</u>	75	0.9	100	1.2	6508	80.6	795	9.9	124	1.5	468	5.9	8070	100
<u>1356</u>			119	1.8	5609	86.4	113	1.7	162	2.5	490	7.6	6493	100
<u>1357</u> <u>i-vi</u>			130	3.5	3395	92.8					134	3.7	3659	100
TOTAL	2142	75	3008	10.5	20751	72.4	908	3.2	286	1	1584	5.5	28675	100

(i) Includes unspecified income and small sums from gabelles and the hospital at Morteluppa

(Source: OSM 253)

Interest from the Monte de'Prestanzoni produced substantial income in 1352 (Lire 1427 between April and December) and the first four months of 1353 (Lire 640), but no more regular sums over the next few years. Subsequently the revenue was probably assigned to new projects since with the completion of the tabernacle in December 1358 the interest was transferred to other uses⁶⁶⁾. The other alternative is that Or S. Michele ceased temporarily to receive interest from the Monte, but to discover why this might have happened we must turn to the registers of the Monte Comune.

On 12 June 1353 the company was included in a list of organisations fined for fraudulent activities. Apparently the captains had managed to ensure that Monte shares which had already matured were not cancelled on the books. As a result Or S. Michele continued to receive interest long after the accounts had been closed. For this felony the company was fined 904 florins⁶⁷⁾. The communal officials may therefore have withheld interest on the Monte de'Prestanzoni shares to pay for this and subsequent fines⁶⁸⁾. Thus interest was paid in the first four months of 1353, but subsequently ceased to be recorded in the register. One can thus understand why Or S. Michele did not have extra money available; the fine of 904 florins was equivalent to Lire 100 more than the company had received in Monte interest between March 1352 and April 1353⁶⁹⁾.

The oblations from the public were the other source used for the tabernacle in these first two years. Although the revenue from offerte had dropped since the end of 1350⁷⁰⁾, they still produced a substantial sum between June 1352 and April 1353. But from May 1353 this source ceased and only began again in a much reduced form two years later. In precisely the same period interest from the company's Monte shares also stopped. Indeed the two factors were perhaps related: the discovery of Or S. Michele's fraudulent activities may have affected the public's support of the cult. Villani may have been referring to this when he accused the captains of dishonesty, since, as one of the Monte officials, he would have known about the fraud⁷¹⁾.

In 1352-53 money from the Monte and oblations produced most of the income for the tabernacle. In subsequent years other sources

were introduced in order to ensure that overall receipts did not decline. The most important were candle-sales. While in 1353 they had represented only 32 percent of income recorded in this account book, by the following year they had jumped to 91 percent and remained at least 80 percent for the following three years. The selling of candles was, moreover, a highly lucrative business, producing a 300-400 percent profit⁷²⁾.

Smaller sums were also used for the tabernacle fund when existing sources were considered to be insufficient. These included money from legacies or debts, the occasional receipts from the company's hospital at Montelupo, and payments from the gabelle on wine.

(All the latter have been included in Table 5 under the category of "Miscellaneous".) But evidently the preferred way of underwriting construction projects was to use money which involved the minimum cost in collection. Thus the captains began to finance the tabernacle from Monte shares and oblations and later passed on to profits from the sale of candles.

The construction of the tabernacle was one of the main features of the development of Or S. Michele after the Black Death. Another was the change in the company's eleemosynary activity.

4 Or S. Michele's charity, 1349-1359

(1) Introduction

E il minuto popolo uomini e femmine, per la superchia abbondanza che si trovarano delle cose, non voleano lavorare agli usati mestieri...E il lavorio, e le manifetture d'ogni arte e mestiero montò oltre al doppio consueto disordinatamente⁷³⁾ .

Recent research on wage-levels largely confirms Villani's observations about the doubling of the price of labour after the Black Death. But chroniclers recorded these facts in order to

register a protest. They objected strongly to the amelioration in the conditions of the lower levels of society since it led, they believed, to laziness and insolence. Insubordination cannot be measured easily 500 years later; Villani's laments may simply have been part of the perennial cry of the affluent about the rising price of labour. More relevant to our study are the popolo minuto's actual conditions of employment and standard of living. There is no doubt that opportunities for work had become more plentiful, particularly for those with specialised skills. But this did not mean that everybody was properly fed, clothed and housed. The lowest paid, such as agricultural workers and cobblers⁷⁴⁾, could not afford to buy enough food to avoid malnutrition, except perhaps during the years 1363-1369.⁷⁵⁾ Although actual starvation was not a problem during the decade following the Black Death, some Florentines had insufficient resources to pay for their rent and clothing⁷⁶⁾.

We should not forget, moreover, that a reasonable standard of living was dependent on the head of household's ability to work. If, for instance, he became ill the family automatically fell below subsistence level⁷⁷⁾, even taking into account that his wife and child might have been employed⁷⁸⁾. We are also taking for granted the availability of work. During the two decades after the Black Death there was relative prosperity throughout Florence, but 1368 marked the beginning of a ten-year recession, which hit many sectors of the economy leading to the reduction of real wages and the growth of unemployment⁷⁹⁾. To find out how Or S. Michele's policy changed to reflect the economic conditions of the 1350s, we shall now turn to examine the company's expenditure on charity.

The scope of Or S. Michele's charitable activities increased considerably after 1348. In just over three weeks of November 1350 the company distributed Lire 6063, whereas before the Black Death the highest monthly figure had been Lire 1241⁸⁰⁾. The

explanation lies not in a dramatic rise in the amount given to the named paupers or the crowds of anonymous poor, but in the diversification of services. Table 7 gives us a general idea of how Or S. Michele's alms were distributed in November 1350. In subsequent sections we will look in detail at each broad category of beneficiary.

TABLE 6.7 Or S. Michele's charity, 3-27.xi.1350 (in Lire di piccioli)

Individuals		Institutions		Pilgrims		Cloth		Total	
L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%
1327	21.9	1946	32.1	2170	35.8	620	10.2	6063	100

(Source: OSM 251)

Or S. Michele's charity in November 1350 makes an interesting comparison with that of June 1347. Three years before most of the company's alms (67.6 percent) had gone to the named paupers, whom the limosinieri had found on their tours of the city⁸¹⁾. However, in November 1350 neither these people nor the poveri a minuto appeared as recipients of charity⁸²⁾. Instead, Or S. Michele gave money to individuals nominated by a testator or to women who needed dowries. In both cases each person received much more than the 5 soldi, which had been given to their regular clients in 1347⁸³⁾. The Lire 1327 spent by the company in November 1350 was divided between only eighty-two people, and, although a few legatees received up to 50 florins, most of the sum (71%) went to individuals who received about Lire 10 each⁸⁴⁾.

The proportion of the company's budget which was given to the second category, institutions, increased from the 1.1 percent of 1347 to 32.1 percent. But here again we see another difference. The earlier donations were either part of the annual alms-giving

programme to convents⁸⁵⁾, or to impoverished members of hospitals. In 1350, on the other hand, all the institutions received these subsidies for their own use; the vast majority were churches or monasteries which spent the money making repairs or expanding their premises⁸⁶⁾.

Distribution of bread to the poor had appropriately enough disappeared and its place been taken by cloth. The accent had therefore shifted from feeding the indigent, who were no longer starving, to clothing them, necessary at the beginning of a winter, which Villani said was distinguished by "smisurato freddo, e ghiacci e nevi e acquazzoni"⁸⁷⁾. Even worse affected than the Florentines were the crowds of pilgrims who flocked to Rome for the Jubilee. The largest item of the company's charitable budget in November 1350 was the purchase of bread and wine to feed the pilgrims, and cloth to renew the tunics. These new activities suggest the influence of the Government, since normally the Commune itself or wealthy citizens provided food for members of visiting religious movements⁸⁸⁾.

(ii) Individuals

As early as August 1348 the Priors of the Commune had singled out two sections of the community, whom they believed had been made particularly vulnerable by the confusion over inheritance after the Black Death: minors and widows. In law both were unable to own property and required a male relative or guardian to witness official documents. Their position was eloquently described in a law of 29 August⁸⁹⁾:

Et quia talis doli, fraudis et metus difficilis est probatio, quamquam semper dicta iuramenta prestantur et fiant ut plurimum, immo quasi semper, dolo, fraude seu metu, dicti minores dicteque mulieres inveniuntur et remanent probationibus destitute, et eorum bonis et substantia denudati... Quis enim tam iuvenili non miserebitur etati: Quis fragilitati sexus non consulet? Quis doti ac matrimonio precipuum denegabit favorem? Quis quietem tranquillam coniugium non nutriet?

Two remedies were proposed which involved Or S. Michele. The first strengthened the legal position of both minors and widows. All acts in future which were likely to lead to a diminution of a patrimony or dowry had to be drawn up in the presence and with the permission of the majority of Or S. Michele captains, as well as a judge and the father or procurator of the legatee. To guarantee that the procedure was adopted, a Lire 100 fine was imposed on any notary who acted without following these guidelines. The captains were, therefore, given a key role in protecting two of the weakest members of society, some of whom may even have become suddenly enriched by the plague, but could not represent themselves in court. It is, though, indicative of Or S. Michele's development that this new function was enshrined in a law. The company's charitable activities were now beginning to be defined by the Commune rather than by the captains alone.

The second remedy proposed by the Government was to provide financial aid⁹⁰⁾. The Priors ordered that widows and minors should be given a proportion of all the money received by Or S. Michele from the sale of bequests. The amounts and the way they were divided in parts of 1350, 1351 and 1352 can be seen in Table 6.8{ see following page}.

TABLE 6.8(a) Or S. Michele's charity, 1350-1351 (in Lire di piccioli)

FEMALES	1350			1351			1351		
	3-27 November			1-16 July			7-15 November		
	Nos.	%	Amount	Nos.	%	Amount	Nos.	%	Amount
(i) Dowries: women/girls	13	14.1	187	23	72.2	937	3	36.7	110
; orphans	18	40	531	9	12.6	164	3	44.7	134
(ii) Widows: alone	7	2.8	37	2	2.2	28	-	-	-
; with children	2	2.6	35	1	4.9	64	-	-	-
(iii) Women *	6	2.3	31	1	0.4	5	1	3.3	10
(iv) Nuns/enter convent	3	4.9	65	1	4.9	64	-	-	-
(v) Pauper/ "vergognosa"	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(vi) Orphans	4	0.5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	53	67.2	892	37	97.2	1262	7	84.7	254
<u>MALES</u>									
(i) Men *	23	25.1	333	-	-	-	4	15.3	46
(ii) Friars/enter monastery	5	3.9	52	3	2	26	-	-	-
(iv) Marriage	1	3.8	50	-	-	-	-	-	-
(v) Prisoners	-	-	-	1	0.8	10	-	-	-
(vi) Orphans	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	29	32.8	435	4	2.8	36	4	15.3	46
Overall Total	82	100	1327	41	100	1298	11	100	300
Daily average	52.29			86.53			375		
							84.11		

* No attributes mentioned.

(Source: OSM 146, 251)

TABLE 6.8(b) Or S. Michele's charity in 1352 (in Lire di piccioli)

FEMALES	2-24 January			14-27 February			7-20 March			17-30 April			5-30 May			June			July			10-20 September			8-20 December			
	Nos.	%	Amount	Nos.	%	Amount	Nos.	%	Amount	Nos.	%	Amount	Nos.	%	Amount	Nos.	%	Amount	Nos.	%	Amount	Nos.	%	Amount	Nos.	%	Amount	
(i) Dowries: women/girls	9	29.8	95	4	47.2	175	2	34.8	24	4	36.7	40	4	9.8	46	-	-	-	1	42.1	85	3	20.9	50	11	19.2	103	
orphans	7	51.7	165	4	15.1	56	6	65.2	45	1	50.5	55	9	61	287	3	75	30	4	34.7	70	3	64.4	154	5	9.3	50	
(ii) Widows: alone	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	41.8	10	8	6.2	33	
with children	1	1.9	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3.2	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
(iii) Women *	-	-	-	1	2.7	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2.1	45	20	17.7	95	
(iv) Nuns/enter convent	2	11	35	2	24.3	90	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	10.9	51	1	25	10	1	5	10	-	-	-	3	4.7	25	
(v) Pauper/ "vergognosa"	1	1.2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8.4	17	-	-	-	4	4.3	23	
(vi) Orphans	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	5.8	31	
Total	20	95.6	305	11	89.3	331	8	100	69	5	87.2	95	15	85.3	399	4	100	40	7	90.1	182	9	91.6	219	55	67.9	364	
MALES																												
(i) Men *	2	4.4	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	7.4	35	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	6.3	15	22	21.5	115	
(iii) Friars/enter monastery	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2.1	5	1	1.9	10	
(iv) Marriage	-	-	-	2	10.7	40	-	-	-	1	7.3	8	1	7.3	34	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
(v) Prisoners	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5.5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	9.9	20	-	-	-	3	8.8	47	
Total	22	4.4	14	2	10.7	40	-	-	-	2	12.8	14	3		69	-	-	-	1	9.9	20	4	8.4	20	26	32.1	172	
Overall total	22	100	319	13	100	371	8	100	69	7	100	109	18	100	468	4	100	40	8	100	202	13	100	239	81	100	536	
Daily average	13.87			28.54			3.63			7.79			18			1.33			6.52			21.73			41.23			

(Source: OSM 146, 251)

Even though the sources are not complete⁹¹⁾, it is obvious that there was a considerable variation in the amount of charity distributed: from a daily average as high as Lire 86.53 in July 1351 to Lire 6.5 a year later. These differences speak less of seasonal fluctuations, except perhaps in the case of December,⁹²⁾ than of the vagaries of supply. Not only did money from bequests come spasmodically, but also the company's budget must have been affected by the Commune's policy of taking forced loans⁹³⁾. The combined effect of these two factors can be seen from March 1352, when the Government appointed an outside official to compel Or S. Michele's creditors to pay what they owed and then loan the proceeds to the Commune⁹⁴⁾.

There was, however, less inconsistency in the way in which charity was distributed. In each month of these two years, females received well over 50 percent of the total alms. Although this was a long-standing characteristic of the confraternity's policy, it was new to emphasize the needs of young orphans. The latter normally received over half of the company's alms and individual subsidies were almost double the amount given to girls whose fathers were still alive⁹⁵⁾. Table 8 also indicates that very little money was given for girls intending to enter a convent. The explanation is not related to company policy so much as to the fact that there was a drop in the number of people wishing to join a religious Order after the plague⁹⁶⁾.

Although the Government had professed that its main aim in directing Or S. Michele's charitable funds was to help widows and minors who had been deprived of their inheritance⁹⁷⁾, the former never received more than 7 percent of the alms distributed in the early 1350s⁹⁸⁾. The desire to stamp out fraud was only secondary to their principal motive, which was to encourage the repopulation of the city after the high mortality caused by the plagues and famines of the previous decade. There was, moreover, some urgency because the Black Death, in common with other epidemics, would have carried off the largest number from

the youngest age group- under five- who were, of course, the parents of future generations⁹⁹⁾.

The Government was also probably aiming to help the unusually large number of young couples who chroniclers suggested were anxious to get married after the Black Death¹⁰⁰⁾. The high mortality rate and low expectation of life in these years tended to encourage men to look for a spouse when they were in their early rather than their late twenties. This reduced the average age gap between couples from between 10-12 to only 7 years¹⁰¹⁾. The result of this was that a larger proportion of girls needed dowries than in more normal times, when the shrinking age pyramid meant that fewer girls found partners¹⁰²⁾. However, one group of the population which was adversely affected by the tendency for men to marry at a younger age were the widows of men who had died during the plague. There was now even less likelihood that they would find another husband, especially as Florentine society usually discouraged widows to remarry¹⁰³⁾.

Another source which provides information about Or S. Michele's charitable activities in the 1350s is a register, which had been compiled in 1360 by order of the Government to check how much Or S. Michele had paid between 1349 and 1356 "per maritare o monacare fanciulle e restaurare chiese e far elemosine"¹⁰⁴⁾. Anyone who had received aid for these purposes since 1347 had to make themselves known and return the sum within one month or risk forfeiture¹⁰⁵⁾. Inevitably not everyone could be traced, since some people had presumably died or moved away, especially true of the poorer sections of the community who were usually fairly mobile¹⁰⁶⁾. The information about institutions is therefore probably more reliable since it would have been easier to verify donations to churches and hospitals. The following section will therefore begin with only a brief discussion of the individuals aided, and will be weighted towards churches.

The table below summarises the types of aid which was recorded in the register from 1349 to 1356:

TABLE 6.9 Aid given by Or S. Michele to dowerless girls and institutions, from the company's register of alms, 1349-1356 (in lire di piccioli)

Date	Marriage		Nunnery		Churches		Hospitals		Misc.		Total	
	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%
28.iii-22.xii	1349	2025	35.2	394	6.9	3126	54.4	199	3.5	-	5744	100
2.i-23.xii	1350	727	8.2	574	6.5	6401	72.2	78	0.9	1085	8865	100
8.i-19.xii	1351	1020	18.1	280	5	4333	76.9	-	-	-	5633	100
24.ii-22.xii	1352 ¹	306	15.9	-	-	1621	84.1	-	-	-	1927	100
14.i-23.xii	1353	1685	28.4	731	12.3	2480	41.9	51	0.9	978	5925	100
8.i-18.xii	1354	768	25.5	25	0.8	2195	73	20	0.7	-	3008	100
14.i-23.xii	1355	532	37.8	52	3.7	774	55	50	3.5	-	1408	100
4.i-28.v	1356	2008	43.1	-	-	2520	54.2	25	0.5	100	4653	100
Total	9071	24.4	2056	5.53	23,450	63.1	423	1.2	2163	5.8	37,163	100

1. Charity on only the following days were recorded: 24-25.ii; 17.iv; 3.v; 20-22.xii

(Source: OSM 255)

As can be seen, the amount of charity fluctuated considerably. The average of these eight years was Lire 4645, but it varied from as little as Lire 1408 to as much as Lire 8865. While these differences may reflect the idiosyncracies of this source, they also suggest that in some years there were shortages of funds. In 1352, for example, when the company distributed Lire 1927 the captains had had to borrow from the tabernacle fund to maintain their monthly limosina per la città¹⁰⁷⁾. In the following year, however, they were able to step up their eleemosynary activity because the Commune had repaid its debt¹⁰⁸⁾.

Although most of the company's charity recorded in this register was given to institutions, some went to women. The average payment was Lire 97, suggesting that money had been taken from bequests, which had been left to dower specific individuals¹⁰⁹⁾, rather than from the more general charitable funds which we discussed in the previous section. However, in a few cases (10) testators had asked the captains to nominate members of good families, which had fallen on hard times. These girls were not described by name, but simply as "una gentile fanciulla" or from an "onorevole famiglia, povera vergognosa"¹¹⁰⁾. In some ways then, Or S. Michele can be seen as a primitive form of Monte delle Doti¹¹¹⁾. Fathers left money on deposit to be given to their daughters when they married. Despite the fact that interest does not appear to have been paid, the company was seen by testators as a safe place to leave money during the plague¹¹²⁾.

While giving dowries was part of the company's function as defined by the Commune, an average of about 70 percent of the alms which were recorded here were destined for building projects.

(iii) Institutions

As we have seen the majority of institutions which were given aid

during the 1350s were churches. The register provides enough information for us to study not only which types were chosen, but also whether testators had favoured churches in the city or the contado.

TABLE 6.10 Churches subsidised by Or S. Michele, 1349-1356 (in Lire di piccioli)

Date	City			Contado			Total		
	Nos.	Amount	%	Nos.	Amount	%	Nos.	Amount	%
28.iii-22.xii 1349	11	2324	74.3	8	802	25.7	19	3126	100
2.i-23.xii 1350	27	4614	72.1	23	1787	27.9	50	6401	100
8.i-19.xii 1351	14	2792	64.4	19	1541	35.6	33	4333	100
24.ii-22.xii 1352	1	340	21	5	1281	79	6	1621	100
14.i-23.xii 1353	8	825	33.3	20	1655	66.7	28	2480	100
8.i-18.xii 1354	12	1075	49	25	1120	51	37	2195	100
14.i-23.xii 1355	5	495	64	7	279	36	12	774	100
4.i-28.v 1356	6	680	27	18	1840	73	24	2520	100
Total	84	13,145	56.1	125	10,305	43.9	209	23,450	100

(Source: OSM 255)

Not only was the overall amount which was given to the churches in the city higher than in the contado. But the payments to individual Florentine churches were almost twice as much¹¹³⁾. This partly indicates the bias of the testators and partly the fact that Or S. Michele's charity was weighted traditionally towards the city, even though the need may have been greater in the contado. The following map of Florence shows all the churches given aid between 1349 and 1356:

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Page 15. Map.

Seventy-five percent of the churches were sited between the second and third walls of the city, the area in which the immigrants of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries had settled. From Table 11 it can be seen that the largest and most populous quarter, S. Giovanni, received most of the charity. But, as with the limosina per la città¹¹⁴⁾, the size and number of inhabitants were not always the most important factors. Thus the churches in the smallest quarter, S. Croce, were given the second largest number of subsidies, possibly because Or S. Michele tended to give preference to its own part of the city¹¹⁵⁾.

TABLE 6.11 Florentine churches subsidised by Or S. Michele, 1349-1356, compared with population of city in 1355 (in Lire di niccioli)

Quarters	Churches		Population	
	Nos.	%	H. of H.*	%
S. Spirito	10	23.3	2724	27.5
S. Croce	11	25.6	1851	18.7
S. Maria Novella	5	11.6	2028	20.5
S. Giovanni	17	39.5	3301	33.3
Total	43	100	9904	100

* = Heads of household.

(Source: OSM 255; population figures have been based upon the 1355 Libro delle Sega as summarised in Barbadoro, "Finanzia e demografia nei ruoli fiorentini d'imposta del 1352", Atti del congresso internazionale per gli studi di popolazione (Rome, 1931), 624-629.

Having looked at the distribution of the churches within the city, it is relevant to enquire whether the company favoured particular types. Over half¹¹⁶⁾ were parish churches, indicating either a

testator's attachment to his neighborhood or that the captains of Or S. Michele found this type of church was particularly poor. However, to say more about the reasons for the selection is difficult when we know so little about the role of the parish in medieval Florence. It is, moreover, complicated by the fact some parish churches were also monasteries or friaries¹¹⁷⁾.

Another category which is easier to distinguish were the female convents, for they never appear to have had any parochial function. There were twelve such houses helped by Or S. Michele and significantly many were relatively new. For example the Donne di S. Orsola had been founded in 1309, the Monastero di S. Caterina in 1310-12, and the Convertite di S. Elisabetta in 1329¹¹⁸⁾.

The projects usually cited as examples of the generosity of testators after the Black Death were not given money by the company: the Bigallo oratory, the Rinuccini frescoes in S. Croce by Giovanni da Milano, Orcagna's painting in the choir of S. Maria Novella, and the construction of the Spanish Chapel¹¹⁹⁾. Neither do subsidies appear to have been given to the Duomo, which was being extended by Francesco Talenti¹²⁰⁾. Instead less famous work was being undertaken. Seventeen churches were making repairs to their fabric, while eighteen more were extending their premises. (See Appendix 4a) A surprising number of repairs were to roofs, perhaps brought about by the extreme temperatures in the early 1350s¹²¹⁾. Matteo Villani described the effects of the bad weather on a convent which Or S. Michele had helped¹²²⁾:

e in Firenze fece rovinare il campanile del monastero delle Donne degli Scalzi e uccise la badessa con sei monache.

The churches' need for aid also stemmed from their financial position before the Black Death. Most would have relied for their income on rents, which had fallen during the 1340s¹²³⁾. By the middle decades of the Trecento these communities often had insufficient

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Page 1B. Map.

funds with which to maintain the fabric of their buildings, since all resources were needed to feed the inmates. For the fortunate few, the plague provided a welcome source of revenue from bequests. Some churches were able to make substantial additions. For example, the friars of S. Spirito and S. Marco built an infirmary, while the Servites a dormitory, and S. Felice in Piazza a choir¹²⁴⁾. Others were constructing new premises, such as the Monastero della disciplina al Portico¹²⁵⁾, or the oratory of St. Anthony on the Ponte alla Carraia¹²⁶⁾. Even confraternities benefitted from the company's largesse. The compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino, for example, was given money to buy land on which to construct a new chapel¹²⁷⁾.

The size of the donations varied considerably, although each subsidy was never less than Lire 25. The church of S. Niccolò Oltrarno was the most favoured, receiving sums totalling Lire 2065 "per fare la chiesa". Here, as elsewhere, it is difficult to determine the proportion of the grant which came from bequests, although at least one contribution was a direct gift from Or S. Michele, as was the sum given to the company of Gesù Pellegrino¹²⁸⁾.

The total amount given to churches in the country was Lire 2840 less than to those in the city¹²⁹⁾. This may partly reflect the captains' desire to stretch their resources over a larger number of churches. But more telling was probably the influence of testators, who had left bequests to parishes with which they had been associated during their lives.

The fact that these testators left bequests to churches in the country probably reflects their attachment to those areas from which their families had originated¹³⁰⁾. Most of these people had come from regions near Florence, as is indicated by the location of many of the churches in Map 2. If one draws a circle around Florence from Lastra a Signa in the west to

Pontassieve in the east, S. Casciano in the south, and Vaglia in the north, one discovers that 59 percent (56 of 95) of the churches were within 15 kilometres.

The favouring of churches near the city also reflects a general trend in the early fourteenth century when much of the property in these areas was acquired by Florentines¹³¹⁾. These zones were among the richest parts of the contado, with the exception of the boggy land around the Arno¹³²⁾. It was presumably for this reason that Florentines did not purchase property along the river, but concentrated on the regions to the north and south of the city¹³³⁾.

There were considerable differences between the types of church chosen in the city and country. Subsidies in Florence were divided almost evenly between parish and monastic churches, but in the contado only 13 percent of the company's alms went to the latter¹³⁴⁾.

The small parish churches marked on the map undoubtedly shared in the general impoverishment of the countryside in the years before the Black Death¹³⁵⁾, especially in those outlying districts to the North, such as Monte Morello, Scarperia, and Barberino. This helps explain why many churches were given subsidies for making repairs to the fabric rather than enlarging existing premises¹³⁶⁾. The money received by country churches was on average only Lire 109 compared with Lire 302 for those in Florence itself. However, even the figure of Lire 109 gives a false impression, because it is distorted by places like Monte Oliveto, which was

left over 700 florins to build a refectory and a chapel.

This bias towards churches in Florence suggests a tendency to favour individuals and institutions in the city. But because the company's books of testaments are so incomplete, it is impossible to judge whether the money given for dowries and to churches was influenced more by testators or the captains or the laws of the Commune. The next section, however, presents information about a form of charity which was administered entirely by the company's officials.

(iv) Limosina per la città

Although Or S. Michele's budget had grown considerably since the Black Death, the captains did not increase the amount which was given to the traditional clientele, whom they had identified by name tickets on the limosina per la città. In 1351 to 1352 total payments to these paupers averaged only Lire 150 per month¹³⁷⁾, which was lower than both the Spring of 1347¹³⁸⁾ and the winter of 1324-25¹³⁹⁾. This may seem surprising considering the vast sums at the captains' disposal, but presumably reflects the amelioration in the living conditions for many of the really poor. But while it remains true that wage-earners certainly benefitted from the increase in wages and the lower food prices after the plague, certain sections of the community, such as orphans and widows, were made more vulnerable by the decease of close adult male relatives. However, before turning to discuss the plight of these paupers, who were subsidised under the company's traditional city-wide charity, we will look to see how the alms were divided among the quarters of the city in 1356-57 :

TABLE 6.12 Or S. Michele's charity to paupers holding name-tickets, 1.iii.1356-31.v.1357 (In Lire di piccioli)

	S. Spirito		S. Croce		SM Novella		S. Giovanni		Misc. *		Total	
	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%
<u>1356</u> <u>iii-iv</u>	44	15.9	81	29.4	39	14.1	98	35.5	14	5.1	276	100
vii	40	18.3	28	12.8	32	14.6	85	38.8	34	15.5	219	100
x	43	20.7	29	13.4	27	13	75	36.1	34	17.4	208	100
<u>1357</u> <u>i</u>	48	23.7	53	26.1	27	13.3	75	36.9	-	-	203	100
iii	34	18.2	28	15	29	15.5	64	34.2	32	17.1	187	100
v	43	19.8	22	10.1	42	19.4	73	33.6	37	17.1	217	100

* = A miscellaneous group of paupers who were listed separately at the beginning of each section.

Alms were apportioned more or less according to the distribution of the population throughout the city, with the exception of the marked bias towards S. Giovanni. This was the most populous quarter and also contained the highest proportion of heads of household who fell within the lowest income bracket (70.75 percent)¹⁴⁰⁾. But it is hard to explain why S. Spirito should have received so much less of Or S. Michele's city-wide charity, when it contained only 6 percent fewer inhabitants than S. Giovanni¹⁴¹⁾. S. Spirito had, moreover, always been one of the poorest areas of the city, and in 1355 62.56 percent of its inhabitants were assessed at Lire 10 or less¹⁴²⁾.

Thirty years earlier Or S. Michele had distributed its charity much more evenly. The maximum received by any one quarter was 27.5 percent and the minimum was 22.1 percent, and no attempt was made to favour a particular quarter¹⁴³⁾. Instead the company concentrated on areas where the captains perceived the greatest need: the recently developed zones between the second and third walls of the city.

Another change which was evident after the Black Death was that 20 percent more of the company's limosina per la città was given to women, making an average of about 85 percent in 1356-57¹⁴⁴⁾. This was part of Or S. Michele's new policy which we have seen in relation to other forms of charity and reflected the captains' recognition of the vulnerability of women who had been left alone by the death of a father or husband. They had to rely on somebody else to represent them in law and their earning power was about half that of a man¹⁴⁵⁾. Therefore 83 percent of the company's charity went to four categories whom the officials saw as the most helpless: female orphans (11%), women with children (31%), widows (11%), and the elderly (30%)¹⁴⁶⁾.

The records of Or S. Michele are not clear about whether the women lived alone or with a husband. One cannot, therefore, calculate how many were represented by the 812 female heads of households in the 1352 Libro delle Sega¹⁴⁷⁾. If, however, we narrow our sights to widows one can be more specific since

we know that they received 8 percent of the c4500 subsidies handed out by Or S. Michele between March 1356 and May 1357¹⁴⁸⁾. Taking into account that the poor were given alms more than once, we can calculate that the company probably helped c113 widows¹⁴⁹⁾. This was equivalent to about a quarter of the 465 widowed heads of household in Florence recorded in the 1352 Libro della Segna, although it should be remembered that this section of the population was under-registered by about 10 percent¹⁵⁰⁾.

83 percent of those subsidised by Or S. Michele on the limosina per la città could be described as "respectably poor", since they were not vagabonds, but identified by an address in the city. Charles de La Roncière has established that before the Black Death up to 65 percent of women and 51 percent of men were described as oste, which he translates as "locataire" or tenant¹⁵¹⁾. He argues that the label was used as an attribute of poverty, which explains why, with cheaper accommodation after 1348, hardly any of Or S. Michele's paupers were identified as oste¹⁵²⁾.

While this argument is basically tenable, the translation of oste as tenant does not always make the same sense after the mid-fourteenth century. In the cases where the word is applied, the individual does not seem to have been involved in a long-term business relationship with her host. Take, for example,¹⁵³⁾

Monna Giovanna di Cina in parto, oste di Monna Lapa del Borgo Vecchio di S. Maria Novella, ebbe a dì V di Settembre (1356) portò Buoso...soldi 10.

Monna Giovanna was obviously not a resident of Borgo Vecchio, but had presumably moved there as Monna Lapa's guest during her pregnancy. While Monna Giovanna may have paid her hostess some kind of rent, she clearly could not afford much if she needed the few soldi distributed by Or S. Michele. There are also examples of women who stayed at institutions, such as Monna

Bartolomea and her four fanciulini, whose host was the Prior of S. Romolo¹⁵⁴⁾. In such cases the pauper was probably receiving free shelter, and the head of the church had approached Or S. Michele on behalf of his guests. This acted in effect as a short-cut to the company's normal system, because the Prior could testify to the character of the pauper without the limosinieri being involved. In the same way debtors in the Stinche prison were given bread¹⁵⁵⁾, and money was donated to the sick in hospitals. In April 1356, for example, the hospitals of S. Paolo and S. Bartolo a Mugnone both received sums for six and three patients respectively, while S. Maria Nuova for as many as thirty-six men and women¹⁵⁶⁾.

The provision of alms to pregnant women or the sick in hospitals suggests another way in which Or S. Michele's charity was being directed for different purposes after the Black Death. These concerns are also reflected in the limosina per la città of 1356-57, because about 17 percent of women and 41 percent of men were described as ill, whereas sickness had never appeared as a reason for aid during the famine months of 1347¹⁵⁷⁾.

Although starvation had been eliminated for the majority of Florentines¹⁵⁸⁾, Villani pointed to another area in which they suffered¹⁵⁹⁾:

E ancora si pensò essere dovizia e abbondanza di
vestimenti...e il contrario apparve in fatto lungamente.

The price of clothes rose to such a level that there was a shortage for the poor. There are scattered references in Or S. Michele's records that the captains attempted to meet the need. Between 1350 and 1355 they bought quite considerable amounts of cloth, which were made into gowns and given to paupers during the Winter months and especially at Christmas. For example, between October and December 1355 the company spent 1000 florins to make 1748

gowns¹⁶⁰⁾. The leading officials apparently selected the people in their own quarter whom they considered to be the most deserving. Thus the limosinieri Buoso e Francesco di Lore gave 78½ channe of cloth to seventy children¹⁶¹⁾, while other employees chose their own poor¹⁶²⁾ relations. However, paupers fell into the same categories as those selected in the limosina per la città: poor women, orphans, young girls, impoverished parish priests and friars¹⁶³⁾.

5 Conclusion

We began this chapter by suggesting that every aspect of Or S. Michele's life had been changed by its large inheritance in 1348. We have seen that this was true of both the company's relations with the Government, for the communal councils came to take a leading role in the election of officials and the direction of funds, and the company's charitable policies, which were expanded in order to incorporate the distribution of considerable sums to impoverished girls and churches.

Another area in which the Black Death is traditionally supposed to have wrought a change was in devotion to the Madonna. Both Matteo Villani and the communal authorities suggested that her popularity diminished¹⁶⁴⁾. However, one wonders whether this rumour had been started in order to provide an excuse to appropriate the company's wealth. The evidence of Or S. Michele's account books does not indicate a fall in income from oblations and candle-sales¹⁶⁵⁾, which were the two most accurate indices of the public's devotion to the Madonna. Furthermore, it seems very improbable that one of the most prominent sculptor-architects, Andrea Orcagna, would have been employed to design a tabernacle for a cult which was moribund.

The suspension of construction work on the oratory could also be taken as indicating the lessening of devotion to the Madonna, But in fact it reflects the reduction in communal income. The

gabelle which the Government had assigned for the project had been drastically reduced¹⁶⁶⁾. The Priors, moreover, were concerned to maintain the cult, for in April 1357 they decided to consecrate the Piazza of Or S. Michele to exclusively religious ends. The grain market was to be moved to facilitate the building programme and to preserve the "pulcherrimum oratorium"¹⁶⁷⁾. This act in many ways symbolises the position of the confraternity in the late-1350s: Or S. Michele was to be fostered by the Government, because it had become one of the most important religious centres in the city. Building the tabernacle and oratory, therefore, was not just to glorify the miraculous Madonna, but also to benefit the Commune, for Mary was soon to become the special advocate of Florence¹⁶⁸⁾.

Footnotes

1. Brucker, Florentine Politics and Society, 7-14, 120-131.
2. Ibid., 129.
3. Villani, I, 4-5 on the popolo minuto's new way of life, and De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 674, 679, for the increase in real salaries after 1348. For information on the monetary history in the post-Black Death period, see Cipolla, Il fiorino e il quattrino, 61-77.
4. Brucker, Florentine Politics and Society, 142-143.
5. Ibid., 173-183.
6. A.B. Falsini, "Firenze dopo il 1348. Le conseguenze della peste nera", A.S.I., CXXIX (1971), 443-445.
7. Direct taxation had been allowed to lapse in 1315: C. De La Roncière, "Indirect Taxes or 'gabelles' at Florence in the Fourteenth Century: the Evolution of Tariffs and Problems of Collection", Florentine Studies, 142. On the 1352 and 1355 Hearth Tax, see B. Barbadoro, "Finanza e demografia nei ruoli fiorentini d'imposta del 1352-55", Atti del congresso internazionale per gli studi di popolazione (Rome, 1931), IX, 615-645.
8. The testament books of the company purportedly cover the period of the Black Death, but only 78 wills are recorded for the whole of 1348: OSM 460-463. La Sorsa, 65, for some reason only counted 30. Other sources confirm that the company received many bequests. See, for example, Prov. of 13.viii.1348, La Sorsa, 226: "innumerosae ultime voluntates civium et aliorum".
9. Villani, I, 7.
10. The only company record to survive for 1348 is a very patchy book of ricordi for the period 7.iii to 9.vi (OSM 146. The company's record-keeping must have broken down during the plague, accounting for the gaps between 6-9.iv and 17.v-3.vi and thereafter). The most interesting information concerns the public's oblations, which were relatively high, suggesting that the outbreak of plague led to an increase in the number of worshippers at the shrine (OSM 146, ff 13r, 20r: Lire 472 for April and Lire 632 for May. These sums were much more than the offerte in 1341: between June and August the company had received Lire 672 from this source: see Chapter 5, n.74.) The confraternity also continued to give alms to the poor in the Spring of 1348. On 6.iv the provveditori del bene de' poveri were elected for a three-month term of office and had been assigned Lire 3,200, which was almost three times the amount given to the poor ten months before during the famine of 1347. (See OSM 146 f 15r for the election of the provveditori, whose duties are described in OSM (1333), cap. I, f 3v and cap. XV, ff 18r-v. The last available figure for the company's charity

before the Black Death was Lire 1241 in June 1347: see Chapter 5, Table 4).

11. For example, Brucker, Florentine Politics and Society, 97 n. 169; M. Meiss, Painting in Florence and Siena After the Black Death. The Arts, Religion and Society in the Mid-Fourteenth Century (New York and London, 1973 ed.), 78, n.26; A.B. Falsini, "Firenze dopo il 1348. Le conseguenze della pesta nera", 453-456, 461-464.
12. See Chapter 5, sections 2 to 3.
13. Provv. Reg. 35, ff 135r-v: 11.iv. 1348 in La Sorsa, 222-223.
14. Provv. Reg. 34, ff 121v-122r: 10.iv. 1347 : La Sorsa 220-221.
15. Provv. of 26.v.1348: La Sorsa, 224-225, transcription from OSM I, ff 24v-26v. (This manuscript is a register containing extracts from most of the main laws which affected Or S. Michele between 1305 and 1531.) The original provvisione is missing. Provv. Reg. 35 ends on 11.iv.1348 and Provv. Reg. 36 begins on 28.viii.1348.
16. Provv. Reg.: 13.viii.1348: La Sorsa, 228 from OSM I, ff 27r-30r. In December another law was introduced to extend the normal cases in which a testament was deemed valid: if it was "scripte coram publico notario, vel manu cuiuscumque alterius publice vel private persone de voluntate testatoris": Provv. Reg. 36, f 32r: 4.xii.1348: La Sorsa, 235. Furthermore the captains were now allowed to call upon the offices of the Podestà, who could proceed against anyone not fulfilling his obligations towards the confraternity.
17. Provv. Reg. 36, ff 25v-26v: 13.xi.1348: La Sorsa, 231-233. The law was passed by 88 votes to 35: Libri Fabarum 29, f 7v.
18. See also R.C. Trexler, "Florence, by the grace of the Lord Pope", Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History, ix (1972), 167-169.
19. Provv. Reg. 36, f 25v: 13.xi.1348: La Sorsa, 230-231.
20. Villani I, 7: "E per le dette cagioni la fede di quella compagnia tra' cittadini e' contadini cominciò molto a mancare".
21. Provv. Reg. 36, f 32r: 4.xii.1348: La Sorsa 234. See also Provv. Reg. 36, f 3r: 13.viii.1348: La Sorsa, 226.
22. Provv. Reg. 36, f 26v: 13.xi.1348. Omitted by La Sorsa, 234. "Et spetialiter et nominatim possint ipsi domini priores vexilliferi et duodecim providere super electione et insacchatione capitaneorum sotietatis predictae pro tempore venturo. Et super statutis et ordinamentis et regimine ipsius sotietatis".
23. Provv. Reg. 36, f 140v: 20.vii.1349: "Et insuper quod deinceps

capitanei societatis predictae eligantur in numero consueto cum eis dovetis (sic) temporibus et conditionibus quibus eliguntur ad presens seu eligi debent secundum ordinamenta Communis Florentie ad presens vigentia in consilio domini capitanei et populi florentini ad pallotas aureas eis modo forma et ordine quibus eliguntur seu eligi debent syndici et officiales pro syndicato et ad sindicandum dominum potestatem civitatem Florentie".

24. Provv. Reg. 38, ff 144r-v: 26.xi.1350: La Sorsa, 250-51.
25. Provv. Reg. of 30.iii.1352: La Sorsa, 256.
26. Villani, I, 7.
27. One should perhaps consider Villani's motivation before accepting at face value everything he says about Or S. Michele. Throughout his Cronica, he was hostile to the men in power. He returned to Florence as a bankrupt and was excluded from the circle which dominated the main posts in the Government. (Brucker, Florentine Politics, 17). His isolation was extended into other spheres, especially as the same group made up the upper echelons of the guilds, Parte and major confraternities. The same men appear among the captains of Or S. Michele (Listed by La Sorsa, 123-166. Giovanni Villani was captain in 1335 and 1342; Filippo was captain in 1329 and 1338: La Sorsa, 178).
28. Provv. Reg. 35, ff 135r-v: 11.iv.1348.
29. There is no indication in Or S. Michele's account books of February and March 1348 that any large sums were passing to the Commune: see OSM 246. Neither do references appear in contemporary provvisioni, libri fabarum, or the communal treasury's accounts.
30. R. Barducci, "Politica e speculazione finanziaria a Firenze dopo la crisi del primo Trecento (1343-1358)", ASI, CXXXVII, (1979), 214-15.
31. Libri Fabarum, 29, f 69r: 22.v.1349.
32. Camera del Comune Entrata 33, ff 121r-v. It was given to the treasurer, Fra Vincenzo, in five payments "occasione et vigore eiusdem reformationis". (13 and 26 June). None of the other account books in the same series record receipts from Or S. Michele in 1349: CCE 31-36.
33. De La Roncière, "Indirect taxes", 166-167, partly because of tariff increases and partly because of a rise in the price of wine.
34. On 22.i.1350 Or S. Michele received 1000 florins and the following April another 500 florins: OSM 249, f lv: payments for the previous two months; OSM 250 under 9 April (unpaginated). See also the thirteenth payment in December 1350: OSM 251(ter.), f 7r: Capitaneorum et rectorum venerabilis societatis Beate Marie Orti Sancti Michaelis de Florentia et ipsius societatis quod predictae de mense Junii proxime preterito

Bartholus Johannis de Siminettis tunc camerarius dicte sotietatis vice e nomine dicte sotietatis mutuavit... septem milia quingentos florenos puri et boni auri de pecunia ipsius sotietatis perventa ad manus dicti camerarii... Et duodecim boni viri... concesserunt, consignaverunt... Bartholo Johannis tunc camerario dicte sotietatis... pro dicto mutuo et quantitate predicta gabellam, redditum et proventum gabelle vini quod venditur et venderetur ad minutum in civitate, comitatu et districtu Florentie pro tempore et termino quindicem mensium tunc futurorum... Et ipsam sotietatem posuerunt in locum et ius Communis Florentie cum privilegiis et immunitatibus, securitatibus cautelis clausulis et penarum adiectionibus et conventionibus quibus facta est deputatio debentibus recipere a Communis Florentie qui appellantur 'creditores del Monte' ut de predictis et aliis patet manu Ser Gini Johannis notarii supradicti".

35. Provv. Reg. 37, ff 70r-v (9.i.1350) referring back to an act of the previous June which no longer survives.
36. Provv. Reg. 39, f 5r: 17.viii.1351.
37. De La Roncière, "Indirect taxes", 150.
38. Receipts from the gabelle between 1348 and 1360 averaged Lire 98, 685 on each of the ten semesters it was raised: De La Roncière, "Indirect taxes", Table II, opp. 176.
39. The amount demanded from Or S. Michele was greatest when income from gabelles were at their lowest. In June 1349 Or S. Michele made a bigger loan when receipts from gabelles were only 80,000 Lire for all the period 1.xi.1348-31.x.1349. The second semester of 1350-51 receipts were at Lire 113, 105 and the first semester 1351-52 down to Lire 97,153. See De La Roncière, "Indirect taxes", Table II, opp. 176.
40. Provv. Reg. 39, ff 105v-106v: 9.iii.1352: La Sorsa, 253-254; the gabelle was not specified. Over the next ten months the Government borrowed 3733 florins, about 1600 florins more than in the previous year: Provv. Reg. 40, f 51r: 28.i.1353.
41. Provv. Reg. 36, f 140r: 20.vii.1349: La Sorsa, 239.
42. Provv. Reg. 36, ff 140r-v: 20.vii.1349: La Sorsa, 239-240. The company gave the operaii another 1000 florins in August 1350: Provv. Reg. 38, ff 100v-101v: 12.viii.1350: La Sorsa, 248-249.
43. In March 1347 expenditure had been Lire 1200 or Lire 39 a day, and in June Lire 1500 or Lire 50 a day. See Chapter 5, Table 3. If one extrapolates the expenditure of these two months over the whole of 1347, the uscita would have been in the region of Lire 16,380. This was an increase of about Lire 5000 over the previous year, assuming income and expenditure were still balanced. Cf Chapter 5, Table 2.
44. Provv. Reg. 34, ff 121v-122r: 10.iv.1347. Heirs were apparently preventing the company's syndics from collecting Or S. Michele's rightful inheritance.

45. The March salaries are more representative, since officials were paid at the beginning of the month: OSM 246.
46. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 673-674 for gardeners; 679-81 for masons working at S. Maria Nuova.
47. The sum spent each month on charity in the Spring of 1347 was Lire 20.93. Cf Chapter 5, Tables 3 and 4.
48. There were six libri dell'entrata and eight libri dell'uscita.
49. 7500 florins was equivalent to Lire 24,000 at the rate of 1 florin at 64 soldi. This even excluded Lire 4480, which the retiring treasurers left in the cash-box, but was omitted from our calculation because it was not earned income from external sources. De La Roncière, Florence, centre économique, IV, 529, for flor. rate.
50. On the state of devotion see Villani, I, 7, and Provv. Reg. 36, f 25v: (13.xi.1348): "Et ne devotio civium et districtualium ac etiam aliorum de circumstantibus partibus, ex inordinatione nimia, que viguit iudicio plurimorum in factis sotietatis predictis tepescat..." (La Sorsa, 230-231).
51. Calculated by multiplying Lire 182.2159 (daily average receipts from bequests) by the number of days in the year.
52. Cf Table 1 for 1349: daily expenses of Lire 730 in February and Lire 411 for March.
53. Provv. Reg. 36, ff 26r-v: 13.xi.1348.
54. OSM 251, f 16v: "Camerlengo officialis mansionis studii: 1000 flor." In Table 4 the florins have been converted into Lire at the rate of 64 soldi: De La Roncière, Florence, centre économique, IV, 528. The Studio was begun in 1348: Villani, I, 8. See also: G.A. Brucker, "Florence and its university, 1348-1434", Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe. Essays in Memory of E.H. Harboden, ed. T.K. Rabb, J.E. Seigel (Princeton, 1969), 220-236.
55. La Sorsa, 107 n.1, followed by Fabbri, Rutenburg, "The Tabernacle of Orsanmichele", 286 n.7 also quotes a figure of 300 florins for work on the vault, supposedly paid on 6.iii.1350. However, the only manuscript belonging to the company surviving for that year (OSM 55) does not include the entry in either 1350 or 1351. OSM 251, f 15v: 27.xi.1350: "in pluribus partibus et pluribus diebus usque in presentem diem pro subsidio laborerii et compliendi laborerium voltarum pallatii (sic.), ubi debet fieri tabernaculum Virginis Marie Ortis S. Michaelis". La Sorsa, 107 n.1 followed by Fabbri, Rutenburg, "The Tabernacle of Orsanmichele", 386 n.7, say that 800 florins was spent in November, whereas it was 80 florins.
56. P. Franceschini, L'oratorio di S. Michele in Orto in Firenze (Florence, 1892), 44-45. The Consuls of the Arte della Seta were

the operaii of the oratory.

57. See note 55.
58. OSM 253, f 29r. It remains unclear whether work was begun before 1352 or was delayed by the completion of the oratory's vault, referred to in OSM 55, under 6.iii.1350.
59. See Table 6.2.
60. For example, Meiss, Painting in Florence and Siena, 79 and Fabbri, Rutenburg, "The Tabernacle of Orsanmichele", 391.
61. Lorenzo Ghiberti, I commentarii, ed. O. Morisani (Naples, 1947), 36: "fu di prezzo di 86 migliaia di fiorini". Written in c.1447: Ibid., vii.
62. The tabernacle bears the inscription: "Andreas Cionis pictor florentinus oratorii archimagister extitit huius MCCCCLIX".
63. OSM 253, ff 29r-34r. After May 1353 the charity must have been taken from other sources.
64. The harvests were dismal and the price of grain rose from 40s to 50s a staio: Villani, III, 56; III, 76: Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, Cronaca fiorentina, ed. N. Rodolico, Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, XXX, 1 (Città di Castello, 1903-1955), 959.
65. OSM 253, f 1r: "Questo quaderno è di Matteo Ughuccione sindacho dela compagnia della Madonna di Or San Michele, nel quale quaderno schriveremo tutti i danari mi perveranno alle mani delle chandele che si trovarono dele chasse del oratorio di Nostra Donna, e di che noi avemo dal Monte dele Prestanze del Comune di Firenze".
66. The façade of S. Reparata and the church of St. Anne. La Sorsa, 257-258 quoting Diplomatico di S. Maria del Fiore, 14.xi.1358 and 28.xii.1358.
67. Monte Comune 1368, ff 13v-14r. Other institutions fined at the same time were the Misericordia -77 florins, and S. Maria Nuova-35 florins: Ibid.
68. See also Monte Comune 1368, ff 18v-19r: 30.vii.1353.
69. 904 florins = Lire 3077; 1 florin = 68 soldi: De La Roncière, Florence, centre économique, IV, 530-531.
70. Oblations produced a monthly average of Lire 256 between June and October 1352, and Lire 345 between January and April 1353. In April and May 1348 income from this source was Lire 472 and 632 respectively (OSM 146, ff 13r, 20r), and in 1350: 18.i-26.ii,

it produced Lire 39 and l.xii-26.xii Lire 702. (Cf Table 2 above).

71. Villani, I, 7. The Monte officials are listed at the beginning of each book: Matteo Villani appears in Monte comune 435 and 436 as scrivano for 1353-1355.
72. Between 1355 and mid-1357 the company spent Lire 4363 on wax, but received Lire 15,512 in candle-sales: OSM 253. Compare Tables 6.4 and 6.5.
73. Villani I, 4-5.
74. In the building trade the average daily rate for unskilled labourers rose from the 1346 level of 3.7s to 6.9s in 1348, 8.4s in 1349 and 10s in 1350. (Goldthwaite, The Building, 436). While the skilled labourer's daily wage in 1346 of 8s had more than doubled by 1350 to 16.8s. (Goldthwaite, The Building, 437). Other sections of the community show a comparable increase. For example, gardeners who had been paid 3s a day in 1340-47, received 7s in 1350-56. (De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 673). A similar rise was found among servants and agricultural workers: De La Roncière, Florence, centre économique, I, 276-279; Stefani, 636.
75. De La Roncière, "La condition des salariés", 24.
76. De La Roncière, Florence, centre économique, I, 425-427.
77. De La Roncière, "La condition des salariés", 24.
78. Women took home approximately half their husband's wage: De La Roncière, Florence, centre économique, I, 471. On children's wages see De La Roncière, "La condition des salariés", 22.
79. De La Roncière, "La condition des salariés", 26-27.
80. This had been in June 1347: see Chapter 5, Table 3.
81. Charity in June 1347: 1.1 percent to institutions, 8.9 percent to poveri a minuto, and 22.4 percent for bread purchases: see Chapter 5, Table 4.
82. In fact the company's limosina per la città did not cease after the Black Death, for it was recorded in 1352: OSM 253.
83. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 718.
84. 58 of the 82 paupers received about Lire 10: calculated from OSM 251.
85. This had taken place every year at Easter: OSM (1333), cap. XXV, f 13r.

86. See section 5 (iii) of this chapter.
87. Villani, I, 56.
88. OSM 251, f 7r: "Pro emendo panem et vinum pro dando et faciendo elemosinas peregrinis civitatis Rome: flor. 300; Pro emendo panem Romandiolis pro tunicis dandis pro Deo: flor. 200". On the Jubilee see Villani, I, 57. When Fra Venturino da Bergamo visited Florence in 1335: G. Villani, XI, 23, or the Bianchi processions arrived in Pistoia in 1399: Giovanni Sercambi, Le Croniche di Giovanni Sercambi Lucchese, ed. S. Bongi, Fonti per la storia d'Italia (Rome, 1892), XX, 350-351.
89. Provv. Reg. 36, f 3r: 29.viii.1348. Printed by La Sorsa, 229-230 and more accurately by Falsini, "Firenze dopo il 1348", 495-498. The law is discussed by Passerini, Storia, 416-417 and Falsini, "Firenze dopo il 1348", 46-461.
90. Provv. Reg. 36, ff 26r-v: 13.xi.1348.
91. It is possible that no charity was paid in August, October and November 1352, since the pagination of the register (OSM 252) was continuous.
92. Daily average for the previous November had been Lire 55.29: Table 6.8 (a).
93. For example the 2135 florins borrowed in August 1351: Provv. Reg. 39, f 5r: 17.viii.1351.
94. Provv. Reg. 39, ff 255r-v: 9.iii.1352.
95. Sums given for other reasons tended to be as low as Lire 5, even though these included one woman who was blind, another who was in prison, and four young girls who had been left destitute by the death of their parents. All these records are less informative about the reasons that charity was given to men. Even in November 1350, when they received 32.8 percent of the aid, the majority were simply listed by name without any attribute of poverty or even trade. On the few occasions that we know why males were being helped, the reason, as with females, was for marriage or entering a monastery. The amounts they received, however, were much lower than those given to women. For example, 16 of the 23 in November 1350 were given Lire 5 or less and only 5 between Lire 6-20.
96. Herlihy, Klapisch, Les Toscans, 208.
97. Provv. Reg. 36, f 3r: 29.viii.1348.
98. See Table 6.8 above.
99. Although no reliable data survives for mortality rates in Florence during the Black Death, the Libri dei Morti for the plague of 1400 indicates that deaths were three times higher among children

under five than any other age group. See Herlihy, Klapisch, Les Tuscans, 461, 489 and A.G. Carmichael, "Epidemic Diseases in Early Renaissance Florence", Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1978, 99.

100. Herlihy, Klapisch, Les Tuscans, 195. The Government followed the same policy after the plague of 1423-25: J. Kirschner, A. Mohlo, "The Dowry Fund and the Marriage Market in Early Renaissance Florence", Journal of Modern History, LX (1978), 406.
101. Herlihy, Klapisch, Les Tuscans, 206-07.
102. Ibid., 206-07.
103. Kirschner, Mohlo, "The Dowry Fund and the Marriage Market", 406; C. Klapisch, "Household and Family in Tuscany in 1427", Household and Family in Past Time, ed. P. Laslett (Cambridge, 1972), 273. According to the 1352 Libro della Segna 14 percent of the 11,500 heads of household were widows: Barbadoro, "Finanzia e demografia", Fig. 2, 630, corrected by De La Roncière, Florence, centre économique, II, 656-657. In 1427 13.7 percent of the population of Tuscan cities were widows (Herlihy, Klapisch, Les Tuscans, 489) whereas the 14 percent in 1352 only represented heads of household; it excluded those who lived with relatives.
104. OSM 255, f lv.
105. Provv. Reg. 48, ff 31r-v: 12.ix.1360: La Sorsa, 258-259.
106. A difference on the amount spent on charity is evident when comparing Tables 8 and 9. Mobility was as true of the mezzadri in the country as the poor in the city: Herlihy, Klapisch, Les Tuscans, 162 and G.A. Brucker, "The Florentine popolo minuto and its political role, 1340-1450", Violence and Civil Disorder in Italian Cities, 1200-1500, ed. L. Martines (Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1972), 158-159.
107. Compare Table 6.6.
108. Provv. Reg. 40, f 51r: 28.i.1353.
109. 77 got married and 23 joined a religious Order.
110. OSM 255, ff 3v, 10r.
111. For an outline of the way in which the Monte delle Doti worked see J. Kirschner, A. Mohlo, "The Dowry Fund and the Marriage Market", 403-08.
112. In nine of the thirteen cases in which this occurred, the fathers

had died before the girls had reached marriageable age.

113. The average payment to an urban church was Lire 157, compared with Lire 84 in the country.
114. See Table 6.12.
115. Or S. Michele was in the quarter of S. Croce.
116. 23 of the 43 churches were parochial.
117. They include the Benedictine foundations of S. Pier Maggiore and S. Felicita dating from 1067 and 1059 respectively: Paatz, Die Kirchen, IV, 629; II, 57-58. Until some more of the basic questions about the structure and even boundaries of parishes have been answered, it is not easy to draw sensible distinctions between the overlapping jurisdictions of different types of ecclesiastical institution.
118. Paatz, Die Kirchen, IV, 559; I, 429-430; II, 30.
119. Meiss, Painting in Florence, 78-79.
120. Paatz, Die Kirchen, III, 329-330.
121. Villani, I, 156; II, 10; III, 14, 17.
122. Villani, III, 14.
123. Cipolla, Il fiorino e il quattrino, 21-22; A. Saponi, "Case e botteghe a Firenze nel Trecento", Studi di storia economica medioevale, (Florence, 1946), II, 324-325.
124. OSM 255, f 18v: Lire 100.
125. OSM 255, f 3v: 50 florins.
126. The oratory of St. Anthony was funded principally by the grain officials: Libri Fabarum 29, f 6Or: 13.viii.1349.
127. OSM 255, f 4v: Lire 150. See also CRS 910.6.A, f 3v, where it is recorded that Or S. Michele gave 20 florins and Lire 150 to the confraternity, which in the 1350s was still known as the compagnia della Misericordia del Salvatore.
128. OSM 255, f 14r: 50 florins given "in aiuto" of S. Niccolò.
129. An average of Lire 109 to country churches and Lire 306 to those in the city.
130. E. Fiumi, "Floritura e decadenza dell'economia fiorentina", A.S.I., CXVI (1958), 497-510.
131. G. Cherubini, "Forme e vicende degli insediamenti nella campagna

- toscana dei secoli XIII-XV", Signori, contadini, borghesi. Ricerche sulla società italiana del basso medioevo (Florence, 1974), 152-154.
132. Ibid., 163.
133. Cf the distribution of parishes in Tuscany in Rationes decimarum Italiae, Tuscia, Le decime degli anni 1295-1304, ed. M. Giusti, P. Guidi (Città di Vaticano, 1942), II, map at end.
134. Twelve religious Orders were given alms and eighty-three parish churches. The general proliferation of Mendicant foundations in the city rather than in rural communities may partly explain this phenomenon: cf "Les ordres mendiants et la ville en Italie centrale": MEFRM, LXXXIX, (1977).
135. Cherubini, Signori, contadini, borghesi, 164-165; G. Pinto, "Firenze e la carestia del 1346-47. Aspetti e problemi delle crisi annonarie alla metà del '300", 49-55.
136. 75 percent of the churches for which we know the reason for their subsidy: 46 out of 61. The rest have been categorized as follows: 10 for building work or buying land; 5 for embellishment; 18 simply given money for limosina. Total is 95. Cf Appendix (b).
137. Cf OSM 254. It was increased to Lire 200 from 1353.
138. See Chapter 5, Table 4. Up to Lire 839 was given per month.
139. See Chapter 5, Table 1 (b): Lire 280-450 was given in each five-week period.
140. B. Barbadoro, "Finanza e demografia nei ruoli fiorentini", 629.
141. In 1355 the population of Florence was divided between the quarters as follows: S. Spirito: 27.4%- S. Croce: 18.5%; S. Maria Novella: 20.8%; S. Giovanni: 33.3%. (B. Barbadoro, "Finanza e demografia nei ruoli fiorentini", 624-629). Omitting the Miscellaneous section, Or S. Michele distributed its charity in the city: S. Spirito: 22.5%; S. Croce: 20.4%; S. Maria Novella: 17.2%; S. Giovanni: 40.1%. (See Table 12).
142. Barbadoro, "Finanza e demografia nei ruoli fiorentini", 625.
143. Newton, "Poverty and charity in late-medieval Florence", Chart 10. In order to compare the data from 1324 I have used Newton's figures to calculate the distribution according to quarter, although he gives the popoli. Alms were distributed in August to October 1324 as follows: S. Spirito: 26.5 %; S. Croce: 22.1 %; S. Maria Novella: 23.9 %; S. Giovanni: 27.5 %.
144. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 691.

145. De La Roncière, Florence, centre économique, I, 471.
146. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 692.
147. Barbadoro, "Finanza e demografia nei ruoli fiorentini", 630.
In the 1352 Libro della Segra women heads of household represented 8.12 percent of the total of 9995.
148. Calculated from OSM 254. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 691 says that 83-87 percent of the alms were given to women.
The average of 8 percent was worked out from Ibid., 692.
149. Individuals were helped on average 2.7 times: De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 720. I have arrived at 113 as follows:
 $8 \text{ percent of } 4500 = 360 \div 2.7 = 133$.
150. Barbadoro, "Finanza e demografia nei ruoli fiorentini", Table 2, 630. De La Roncière, Florence, centre économique, II, 656-657.
151. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 692, 694.
152. Ibid., 693-694.
153. OSM 254, f 35r.
154. Ibid., also on 5 September 1356.
155. The bread was made from the 24 staiona of grain which the company's hospital at Montelupo provided each month. Records of the baker are in OSM 233 covering the years 1358-1362. For the tradition of giving subsidies to prisoners see OSM (1333), cap. XXVI, ff 13r-v. The Commune had also granted the company the right to buy 1500 moggie of grain at a special price agreed between the captains and the grain officials, although there is no evidence that Or S. Michele took advantage of the opportunity in the fourteenth century: Provv. Reg. 36, f 32v: 4.xii.1348: La Sorsa, 237.
156. OSM 254, ff 7r, 9r.
157. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 692, 694.
158. Villani, I, 7 suggests that "i mendichi poveri erano quasi morti".
159. Villani, I, 5.
160. OSM 55, ff 34v-40r.
161. OSM 55, f 35v: for November to December 1355.
162. OSM 55, f 39r: for example, the cousin of the notary was described as "poverissima" and given 6 canne with which to make three gowns.

163. Ibid., ff 36v, 35v, 37v and 38r.
164. Villani I, 7; Provv. Reg. 36, f 25v: 13.xi.1348.
165. See above, Table 6.6.
166. De La Roncière, "Indirect taxes", 140-192. In 1349 and 1350 the Operai of the project, the Consuls of the Seta guild, petitioned the Priors complaining that the shortage of money meant that they could not carry on the work and that the structure was becoming damaged: Franceschini, L'oratorio di S. Michele in Orto, 44-45. We await Diane Zervas's monograph on the building of the oratory for a clearer idea about the stages of construction.
167. Provv. Reg. 44, ff 117r-v: 17.iv.1357: La Sorsa, 256-257.
168. F.L. Del Migliore, Firenze, città nobilissima illustrata (Florence, 1684), 534, suggests this took place on 13.viii.1365.

CHAPTER 7

The Company of Or S. Michele,
1360 - 1433

The history of Or S. Michele in the late 1350s revealed that despite considerable government interference the confraternity retained its position as the leading charity in Florence and as the centre for an important religious cult. The present chapter will, however, reveal a very different picture, for the period from 1360 to 1433 saw a gradual decline of the company. Almost every aspect of Or S. Michele's life came to be subjected to official scrutiny as the Priors became increasingly convinced that the slow progress on the construction of the oratory was caused by the inefficiency and corruption of the officials. Although the company possessed substantial assets in the form of property and Monte shares, most of the income from these sources had frequently been assigned by testators to other individuals or corporations. The cash at the captains' disposal was therefore limited to sources which often fluctuated according to the reputation of the company: bequests, oblations and candle-sales. The captains then had to face the constant dilemma of having to divide their funds among administrative costs, the increasingly high expenditure on building the oratory and what was supposed to be their main function,

the distribution of alms. These conflicting factors will be studied separately in each period, and seen against the background of flagging public support for the Madonna and increased government supervision.

1 (i) The Florentine Government and Or S. Michele's Finances,
1360 to 1369

During the decade following the Black Death, the Commune had managed to establish a considerable hold over Or S. Michele. This was achieved partly by interfering in the election of company officials and also by instructing the captains how they should spend their wealth. The Government of the 1360s built on this position in order to increase its power over the confraternity. Five provisions were passed affecting Or S. Michele between 1360 and 1366. Although ostensibly each law was introduced for a different reason, the basic motive was the Commune's desire to exercise even further control over Or S. Michele's patrimony.

Thus a law in September 1360 expressed concern that sums which had been given by the company for dowries or for constructing churches might have been misspent. Or S. Michele was therefore instructed to contact everybody who had received funds for these purposes since 1347¹⁾. If the Priors' basic concern here was that the confraternity's money should not be used for illegitimate purposes, the same was true of a law in the next month, which established that a member could not be elected as captain if he was involved in litigation over a legacy with Or S. Michele²⁾. Presumably the Priors wanted to prevent officials from pressurising their colleagues.

Both provisions suggest that bequests still played an important

role in the day to day running of the company. This is confirmed by the deliberations of the society's council meetings, which were dominated by discussion of testaments or the authorisation for the payment of heirs³⁾. Some of these bequests dated from the Black Death, but the majority were later gifts. The company's testament books, although incomplete, show a considerable rise in receipts during epidemics, especially that of 1363-64, which was the first virulent attack of plague since 1348⁴⁾.

The enrichment of the confraternity caused the Government to change its policy. From solicitous interest in how the charitable funds were spent, a law of 1363 gave the Priors direct access to the company's newly acquired wealth. The Commune was now able to borrow all revenues accruing from bequests which the confraternity had received since 1344, as well as property inherited in the following twelve months. However, this was not a direct appropriation of assets, because provision was made to repay the company within ten years⁵⁾. Once again, as in November 1348, it is difficult to establish how far the law was put into effect. The Commune continued to tap the funds of Or S. Michele, because only two years later the confraternity was ordered to supply 500 florins for the construction of S. Reparata⁶⁾. But the sum was much less than any previous loans⁷⁾, perhaps reflecting the reduced resources. This is confirmed by the fact that the Misericordia, which had inherited much less than Or S. Michele during the Black Death, was asked for double the amount⁸⁾.

In the same year, 1363, another law established that the captains of Or S. Michele could not be prevailed upon to give a loan against their wishes⁹⁾. Presumably the Priors wanted to make sure that the captains did not appropriate confraternity funds and the Commune had the monopoly of the money available. This idea is reinforced by a provision of 1366 in which the Government sought to gain direct control over the company's finances. In future all Or S. Michele's treasurers were to be

communal officials. The first was Recco Guido Guazzi who like his successors was drawn from the purses containing the treasurers of the "camerarius extraordinarius dictis Communis"¹⁰⁾. The character of the office was completely changed. The treasurer was now paid a stipend of 5 florins a month, instead of acting voluntarily, and submitted his accounts to the Comune at the end of his six-month term of office¹¹⁾.

The justification behind these moves was to protect and foster Or S. Michele and the poor of the city¹²⁾, and to prevent any "unsuitable and dishonest" officials from taking advantage of the company in order to obtain large loans¹³⁾. Although this may reflect genuine official concern about the decline of the confraternity, this provision was in fact only one of a series of measures taken at a time when the Government was particularly short of funds¹⁴⁾.

Evidence that the company's affairs were not running smoothly in the mid-1360s is confirmed by the Ricordanze of Or S. Michele's scribe, Jachopo di Lutozzo¹⁵⁾. On 5 March 1367 the captains took stock of the situation and declared that "questa compagnia a molto debito e che poco limosina ci si fa"¹⁶⁾. The reason for the lack of revenue was simple: too much money had been spent on the oratory. This was in fact a new problem, because until very recently the Arte della Seta had been responsible for the direction of construction work, which had been almost entirely underwritten by communal income. Then in the early 1360s, the Arte had handed over administration to the confraternity itself. The latter was given receipts from the Monte Comune and the gate gabelle¹⁷⁾, which at this time was producing a high yield¹⁸⁾. But because the Comune was in desperate need of money, the amount given to Or S. Michele may have been lower than before, with the result that the company itself had

to help finance the oratory. The captains therefore decided to assign for the project receipts from oblations, candle-sales, and interest from the Monte shares which had been acquired after the Black Death. This was not a new nor permanent solution, but simply for two months in order to enable the captains to pay off the debts from the oratory and give alms to the poor¹⁹⁾. Realising that even more income was required, the captains decided to liquidate all assets which could be sold freely.

These proposals did not resolve the difficulties, because a month later another council met to consider a new solution²⁰⁾:

I chapitani di questa compagnia, eccietto Romigi d'Andrea Rondinelli, chonsiderato la piccola entrata e'l gran debito ch'al presente si truova avere la decta compagnia, e le poche limosine e le grandi spese in murare che ora ci si fanno, diliberavano di prendere partito se da seguitare fosse o non il lavoro che per addornamento e salvezza del tabernacholo di Nostra Donna è inchominciato nell'arcora del' palagio, il quale è sopra il detto tabernacholo.

Clearly the captains had reached a difficult stage: either the company would need to spend immediately large sums on finishing the arcade on the Eastern side of the oratory or the tabernacle would be ruined. They decided to continue with the work, but not willing to shoulder the full responsibility the captains took the advice of "più e più cittadini"²¹⁾. A series of eminent citizens was enlisted including Giovanni Boccaccio, the heads of both the Albizzi and Ricci families, and Salvestro di Messer Alamanno de' Medici. Clearly care was being taken not to be associated with any one political party, especially important in 1367, since it was just after the bitter struggle between conservative and popular factions over the privileges of the Parte Guelfa²²⁾.

This non-partisan group then concerned itself with the arrangements for the immediate removal of the grain market which was supposed

to have taken place ten years earlier²³⁾:

per acrescimento di divozione ed utilità della detta
compagnia e bellezza ed orrevolezza del detto tabernacholo
ed eziandio di tutta la città.

As in the previous March the captains were above all concerned to encourage devotion to the Madonna. Put most crudely, if her popularity waned there would have been a drastic drop in income; without the donations of the worshippers or the purchase of candles, two of the main sources for building and their charitable programme would vanish. Beyond that, the raison d'être of Or S. Michele as the centre of a cult would be lost, important not just for the company itself, but also for the religious life of the city.

The probability that devotion to the Madonna was declining is also indicated by the drop in receipts from the Arti's oblations between 1360 and 1364²⁴⁾, which occurred even though Or S. Michele continued to be the focus of guild festive activity. Moreover the captains continued in their efforts to make public festivals more splendid. For example, a large blue awning, decorated with yellow lilies was ordered to cover the whole road flanking one side of the oratory. The function was presumably partly practical, since the weather had been particularly bad in recent months²⁵⁾, but also to emphasize the importance of the festival of St. Anne and the role of the Madonna as the central focus of the celebrations²⁶⁾.

The maintenance of the popularity of the Madonna was necessary if the confraternity was to have sufficient funds to maintain its charitable activities, which, as we shall see, remained very much in demand.

1 (ii) Or S. Michele's charity, 1360 to 1369

Although most of this decade has been described as a period of prosperity for the majority of Florentines²⁷⁾, there were a number of factors which brought temporary hardship to the poorer sections of society to which Or S. Michele directed its charity. The wool industry, which was the single largest employer in the city, suffered setbacks in 1360-63 and from 1368 onwards²⁸⁾. In addition to problems of employment, bad weather and poor harvests in the period 1367 to 1370 led to a noticeable increase in grain prices²⁹⁾ without a similar rise in salary-levels³⁰⁾.

Table 7.1 permits one to assess whether the captains of Or S. Michele attempted to apportion their limited funds according to the needs of the poor. (See following page)

It is difficult to judge from the annual or even monthly figures whether the captains had anything as well defined as a charitable policy in the 1360s. There was considerable variation in the alms given in each year, but this probably related to the vagaries of the company's income rather than decisions to divert money from other sources to the poor. In the period May to July 1365, for example, the average monthly alms was as high as Lire 1314. However, 52.1 percent of the total charity was donated to churches, which suggests that the source for this donation was a bequest, from the 1363 plague, especially as 420 florins were spent on a construction project in S. Maria del Carmine³¹⁾.

There are signs that the captains were aware of the necessity to adapt the way in which they distributed alms according to varying conditions in the city. Thus in a period of relative prosperity such as 1361³²⁾, the emphasis was placed on subsidising young girls who wished to get married rather than giving money

TABLE 7.1 Or S. Michele's charity, 1361-1369 (in lire di piccioli)

Period	Dowries L. %	Churches L. %	City L. %	Prisoners L. %	Cloth L. %	Misc. L. %	Total L. %	Monthly Av. L.
1361: 1.v-14.x	192 51.2	- -	142 37.9	41 10.9	- -	- -	375 100	75
1364: 14.v-28.x	30 7.3	53 12.8	330 79.9	- -	- -	- -	413 100	75
1365: 2.v-13.vii	309 10.2	1573 52.1	1140 37.7	- -	- -	- -	3022 100	1314
1366: 1.v-23.ix	8 1.6	37 7.3	- -	- -	462 91.1	- -	507 100	110
10.xi-16.xii	44 3.7	- -	1130 95.5	9 0.8	- -	- -	1183 100	1183
1367: 7.i-22.xii	535 9.7	197 3.6	3271 59.2	- -	876 15.9	647 11.7	5526 100	481
1368: 3.i-15.xii	130 3.4	951 25	2340 61.5	- -	118 3.1	263 6.9	3802 100	331
1369: 3.i-19.ix	305 21.3	193 13.5	822 57.5	- -	62 4.3	47 3.3	1429 100	168

(Sources: OSM I (bis) , 2,3,4,5,56)

to subsidise a poor family's food bill. In 1364, on the other hand, the situation was more than reversed for 80 percent of alms was distributed to paupers on the limosina per la città. The company was evidently attempting to help those people who had been affected by the plague attack of the previous year, and then the particularly bad weather which had followed almost immediately afterwards³³⁾. Temperatures also seem to have played an important part in the way charity was distributed in the summer of 1366. During the exceptionally cold months of May and June³⁴⁾ the company gave 91 percent of a very reduced charitable budget to buy cloth for the poor.

During earlier decades the captains' dedication to their charitable task had been measured largely by the efficiency with which they had administered the company's limosina per la città. However, by 1367 the captains, as has been seen, were complaining of the poche limosine ci si fa³⁵⁾. They blamed this situation on the large amounts which they had been forced to spend on the oratory. But it is also possible that the captains themselves had grown lax at a time when the improved standard of living had meant that fewer people needed help. The company officials were nevertheless inspired to greater activity by the intervention of the Government. The proportion of alms spent on the limosina per la città increased considerably both in the year following the law of 1364 and during the period immediately after the law of 1366. The captains' own deliberations in Spring 1367 had had the same effect, for subsequently at least 58 percent of alms went on the city-wide distribution, although this may also reflect a renewed desire to help those paupers who were beginning to be affected by the depression at the end of the decade.

However, it should also be pointed out that this limosina per la città was not identical to the system in operation in the mid-1350s and before³⁶⁾. The thousands of paupers who were helped with a few soldi before the Black Death had now been replaced by a smaller number who were given more substantial

sums. The reason for this change must be sought in the improved finances of the majority of people after 1348. Those wage-earners who had been hit by the rising prices and falling salaries during the depression of the 1340s were now much better off. The company could afford to give much more realistic subsidies. (See Table 2.) On 14 May 1367, for example, Lire 485 was distributed among only fifty-eight people³⁷⁾. This gave each one an average of Lire 8.4, which was equivalent to 18½ days' work for an unskilled labourer in the building industry³⁸⁾ and would have been enough to feed a family of four for nearly a month³⁹⁾.

TABLE 7.2 Distribution of Or. S. Michele's city-wide charity by percentage, 14.v.1367 (in Lire di piccioli)

	Lire 1-5	Lire 6-10	Lire 11-15	Lire 16-20	Lire 21-25	Lire 26-30	% Total
Dowries	1.7	22.4	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	31
Women	13.8	13.8	1.7	-	-	-	29.3
Men	12.1	8.6	-	-	-	-	20.7
Churches	-	15.5	-	3.5	-	-	19
Total	27.6	60.3	3.5	5.2	1.7	1.7	100

(Source: OSM 5, ff 3v-6v)

Even though May 1367 followed an exceptionally cold winter⁴⁰⁾, the captains gave only 50 percent of their funds to adult men and women. The other half went to girls for dowries or subsidies to churches, a division explicable in part because the cost of living had not yet begun to rise significantly⁴¹⁾.

The preference for these two categories, even in the limosina per la città, indicates that the captains were still following the guidelines which had been laid down by the Priors after the Black Death⁴²⁾. Whether this policy was abandoned when the economy became more depressed will be seen in the next section.

2 (i) The Florentine Government and company finance, 1370-1379

The tone of the Priors towards the company changed in this decade. Instead of concern for its declining finances, the Government had become suspicious of the officials, who by now had acquired a reputation for scandalous administration. The only provvisione which affected Or S. Michele in the 1370s was passed in 1377, when the captains had been discovered dividing the alms among themselves rather than giving them to the poor. This would not have been difficult because most of the charity was now given to individuals who were chosen by the captains⁴³⁾. The Priors ordered that in future, distribution should be done openly and that the treasurer should not be allowed to spend anything without the consent of all the captains⁴⁴⁾.

Inheritance was the other subject which was dealt with in 1377, although the Government had reversed its earlier policy. Instead of protecting the rights of Or S. Michele, the Priors showed concern that heirs should not be defrauded by the captains. The latter were instructed to pay testamentary obligations before deciding on how much to distribute in charity⁴⁵⁾. Another law, possibly following the plague of 1374, had sought to intervene on behalf of heirs, and more especially minors and widows, who had to be represented in court by an adult male⁴⁶⁾. For

women it was even more imperative that a trustworthy representative should be found, because; unlike men, few gained legal emancipation at the age of twenty-five⁴⁷⁾. Problems could and obviously did arise with unscrupulous administrators, who, according to the Priors, were alienating and borrowing dotal funds. In future, recalling the provision of August 1348⁴⁸⁾, any act involving these goods had to be taken in the presence of the majority of Or S. Michele captains, a qualified judge, and the father or procurator of the individual.

The preoccupation with legacies was also reflected in the company's libro dell' uscita from the winter of 1370-71:

TABLE 7.3 Expenditure of Or S. Michele, 6.ix.1370-28.ii.1371
(in Lire di piccioli)

Period	Charity		Heirs		Salaries		Misc.		Total	Monthly
	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	Av.
6.ix-28.ii.1370-71	1422	20	4206	59	1067	15	473	6	7168	1195

(Source: OSM 256. Although the account book contains the main elements of the company's budget, there is no way of telling whether it is complete.)

Although the amount of money which was spent on testamentary obligations was considerably less than immediately after the Black Death, Or S. Michele was still devoting 59 percent of its expenditure to heirs⁴⁹⁾. Charity and salaries were the other two main expenses, the former accounting for 20 percent of the company's outgoings and the latter 15 percent. The amount given to the poor is in line with the expenditure in the previous decade⁵⁰⁾. What is more surprising is the cost of the staff. About twenty men were employed to administer legacies and the cult. These included notaries, lawyers and accountants, as well as a series of people to maintain the cult. Men were required to light and extinguish the candles after services, and to receive oblations⁵¹⁾, in addition to the priests who were also elected to hear general confession after the daily service⁵²⁾ or preach at festivals.

Special musicians were also hired to play at festivals, while four laudesi sang every evening accompanied by an organist and viola-player⁵³⁾.

Very little information survives otherwise about the company's devotional life in the 1370s. There are occasional references to the amounts collected from the cash-boxes containing oblations⁵⁴⁾ and receipts from candle-sales, both of which indicate the continuation of public support for the cult⁵⁵⁾, even though these sources were considerably reduced when compared with twenty years earlier⁵⁶⁾. Nor did either source produce enough income for the construction of the oratory. Building work had been suspended in 1372 through lack of funds, and was only taken up again in 1378, when a decision was made to close the arches on the Via Calimala, reinforce the foundations and construct two new organs⁵⁷⁾. These six years also corresponded to a period of increasing hardship for many Florentines. To see whether the captains made a conscious decision to direct money to the poor we must turn to the section on charity.

2 (ii) Or S. Michele's charity, 1370-1379

The eight years leading up to the Ciompi revolt were characterised by a depression in many sectors of the economy, especially for those working in the building and cloth trades⁵⁸⁾, made worse by the plague between March and October 1374⁵⁹⁾. Bad weather followed during the subsequent Winter and early Summer⁶⁰⁾, and the price of grain soared to the almost unheard-of figure of 51 soldi a staio⁶¹⁾. Although the price fell almost immediately⁶²⁾, the Government, in desperate need of money to finance the war against the Pope, imposed a series of exceptionally heavy prestanze⁶³⁾ during a time when the economy was already depressed. While the maestri could normally cope in this situation, the day labourers fell well below the level to which they had grown accustomed during the previous decades⁶⁴⁾. As in the earlier periods of hardship, families were worst hit: it was only a 34 percent rate of indigence among bachelors, while 60 percent in the case of labourers with a wife and children to support⁶⁵⁾.

TABLE 7.4 Or S. Michele's charity, 1370-1379 (in lire di piccioli)

Period	Dowries		Churches		City		Cloth		Prisoners		Misc.		Total		Monthly Av.	
	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%
1370:10.v-25.vi	25	11.6	20	9.2	149	69	-	-	-	-	22	10.2	216	100	144	
11.vii-8.xii	379	16.6	71	3.1	500	21.9	1330	58.2	-	-	4	0.2	2284	100	457	
1372-73: 9.xi-14.i	425	16.1	1047	39.7	259	9.8	905	34.3	-	-	-	-	2636	100	1318	
1373: 21.vi-31.x	252	3.8	25	0.4	3532	52.7	2318	34.5	299	4.5	-	-	6703	100	1559	
1376: 2.v-31.x	2425	29.8	514	6.3	3531	43.4	1671	20.5	-	-	-	-	8141	100	1357	
1378-79: 15.x-14.iv	427	6.7	641	10	2920	45.4	2433	37.9	-	-	-	-	6421	100	1070	

(Source: OSM 6-11, and 464 (Cria 9566))

There was thus an even greater need for Or S. Michele's services in Florence, and the captains, as we shall see, made an effort to adapt their meagre resources to the changes in the standard of living. While the monthly charitable budget in 1370-71 was only between Lire 221 to 477, this rate had tripled by the Summer of 1373. The increase can perhaps be attributed to the transference of money from the oratory fund with the temporary cessation of construction work⁶⁶⁾. The sources are not clear on why the oratory should have been abandoned, unless the company was under pressure to provide more alms, as not only nominal wages began to fall⁶⁷⁾, but also their real value was diminished by the devaluation of the quattrino, the currency in which the workers were paid⁶⁸⁾.

There is no information available about alms during and immediately after the plague of 1374⁶⁹⁾, but when the records resumed two years later charity was still as high as in 1372. The worsening recession and high levels of taxation⁷⁰⁾ affected more people than just the destitute. In 1378, on the other hand, Or S. Michele's average monthly charity dropped by about a third. This may have been related to a drop in income after the captains' 'fraudulent' activities of the previous year⁷¹⁾, but also to the slight amelioration in living conditions in the period immediately before the Tumulto dei Ciompi⁷²⁾.

Variations in the categories which were most favoured also suggest that the captains attempted to meet the needs of the poor. In 1373, for example, when the recession was at its worst, more money was spent on the city-wide system, for in this way support could be given to a larger number of people. Young girls who were in need of dowries were also helped in 1376, although this may partly reflect the wishes of testators who had left bequests during the 1374 plague, as much as the helplessness of impoverished orphans trying to get married. Cloth constituted about a third of the company's charity, but dropped to less than a fifth in 1376 when the first priority of paupers would have been the purchase of food. Unfortunately no records have survived for 1377 to indicate whether the Priors were correct in accusing the captains of diverting alms to friends⁷³⁾. However, one effect of the law which is immediately evident in the register beginning in October 1378 is that the scribe was more efficient in keeping a note of the names of those who received alms. Although little information is provided about occupation⁷⁴⁾, the records do indicate where a pauper lived. Table 5 summarises the geographical distribution of alms for January 1379:

TABLE 7.5 Distribution of Or S. Michele's charity in Florence,
January, 1379

Quarter	Nos. of Paupers	%	H. of H. per $\frac{1}{2}$ in 1355 (%)	H. of H. * assessed at L. 10 or under, 1355 (%)
S. Spirito	53	34.6	27.4	62.6
S. Croce	17	11.1	18.5	47.4
S. Maria Novella	11	7.2	20.8	55.9
S. Giovanni	72	47.1	33.3	70.7
Total	155	100	100	100

* = H. of H. = Head of Household

(Source: OSM 464 (Cria 9566). For 1355 Libro della Serra
see Barbadoro, "Finanza e demografia", 624-629).

In the autumn of 1324 each quarter had received more or less the same proportion of the limosina per la città⁷⁵⁾, while in March 1356 to May 1357 there had been a bias in favour of S. Giovanni at the expense of S. Spirito⁷⁶⁾.

In January 1379, on the other hand, alms were weighted towards S. Spirito and S. Giovanni. This suggests that the captains had gradually tailored their charity towards the poorest quarters of the city, for the tax officials in 1352 had assessed 70 percent of the heads of household in S. Giovanni at Lire 10 or less and 62.6 percent of S. Spirito⁷⁷⁾.

The company's registers also reveal that 85 percent of the paupers in the quarter of S. Spirito came from the parishes of S. Frediano, S. Felicita, and S. Felice in Piazza, while 76 percent in S. Giovanni were from S. Lorenzo, S. Ambrogio and S. Pier Maggiore⁷⁸⁾. These areas which had traditionally been the centre of the company's patronage now received about

a fifth more of the charity than in the Autumn of 1324⁷⁹⁾.

This suggests that during the Trecento Or S. Michele had sought to adjust its charity to patronise those sections of the city where there was most poverty. The six parishes which came to receive a higher proportion of alms were all on the outskirts of the city, the areas in which immigrants had traditionally settled⁸⁰⁾. Indeed after the Black Death, and particularly between 1364 and 1371⁸¹⁾, a growing number of contadini came to Florence in search of work. At least some of these new arrivals may have been among Or S. Michele's clientele, especially as the cost of living began to rise in the late 1360s and early 1370s. These zones of the city also corresponded with some of the centres of insurgence during the Ciompi revolt⁸²⁾, which suggests that some of the poorest elements of the Ciompi supporters may have been among the recipients of a charity which was to an increasing degree associated with the State.

During the 1370s, despite the Priors' accusations that the captains were embezzling funds, Or S. Michele had succeeded in boosting the amount of alms in response to the increased demand from the growing number of Florentines who had fallen into indigence. The average monthly charitable payments had more than doubled from the previous decade, when a reasonable standard of living had been accessible to many people⁸³⁾. One way that the captains were able to provide extra funds was by the suspension of building work on the oratory. But how long the Priors were prepared to wait for the completion of a building which played such an important role in public festivities, will be seen in our study of Or S. Michele's history over the next fifty years.

3 (i) The Florentine Government and Or S. Michele's finances,
1380-1399

The problem as to whether the company should spend more on charity or constructing the oratory became even more acute during the next two decades. On the one hand, the Priors' put pressure on the captains to finish the last stages of the building work and, on the other, the need for Or S. Michele's charity grew as the economy became more depressed, especially between 1384 and 1393⁸⁴⁾. This tension between conflicting demands on Or S. Michele's diminishing capital was to remain a characteristic of the company's history over the subsequent twenty years.

The first provvisione in this period to affect Or S. Michele (26.iv.1381) set the tone for subsequent legislation. In order to prevent fraudulent use of funds, the popular regime removed from the captains the right to elect their own scribes and accountants. In future they were to be appointed by the Republic and paid a salary⁸⁵⁾. In this way the Commune was able to supervise directly two key figures in the administration of company finances and therefore prevent the captains from using funds to build up their own clientele.

But the law of 1381 cannot have had much effect, because two years later another provision described the company as in a deplorable state. Significantly the first "abuse" noted was that the captains had ceased to celebrate Mass on entering office. The implied lack of devotion to the Madonna caused the public to regard the company as less worthy of its oblations and bequests. The Priors also objected that alms were no longer being distributed to the poor. Although this was an exaggeration, the system obviously no longer seemed efficient to outsiders. The captains were held responsible and it was

even rumoured that retired officials continued to dictate how alms were spent, suggesting that a small group of men had come to dominate the company. In future, therefore, the captains had to swear when they made a distribution "*quod talis pecunia revera et: pro bona elemosina et in egentem personam vel locum convertitur*"⁸⁶⁾. The treasurer was also warned that he had to give alms to the people nominated by the captains "*sine fraude vel simulatione aliqua et sine aliqua fictione vel deceptione*"⁸⁷⁾. All of which implies that officialdom at every level had been implicated in fraud⁸⁸⁾. The Priors decided to dispense with the services of all employees except for a notary, treasurer, scribe and accountant, and established that they were only allowed to hold office for one year and could not be re-elected if they were related to the captains⁸⁹⁾.

The other main problem was lack of revenue. In addition to the fact that the number of bequests left to the company was now more limited, the captains had difficulty in persuading heirs and creditors to pay what they owed to Or S. Michele. Indeed in 1385 Or S. Michele was described as "*quasi destitutum et derelictum*"⁹⁰⁾. The company had sold a lot of property and, having used the proceeds for alms, was now left with commemorative obligations to fulfil without the income to pay for them. The Priors suggested that in future the captains should make sure that there was sufficient income to meet the obligations before accepting a bequest or selling property.

The captains had also ascribed their penurious state to the considerable expenses of the oratory⁹¹⁾. By 1380 the arches were probably complete, for the builders began the ornamentation of the lunettes. At the same time work was continued on the pavement around the altars of St. Anne and the Madonna⁹²⁾. Evidently the Priors were aware of the necessity of finishing the building soon and ordered that 10 percent of the company's

income should be reserved for the project, thus placing construction work before alms-giving⁹³⁾. But further provvisioni of 1388 and 1392 complained of the continual shortage of funds⁹⁴⁾. Although Or S. Michele had continued to sell property to pay debts⁹⁵⁾, the amount devoted to the "ornamentum et perfectionem"⁹⁶⁾ of the oratory was insufficient. In order to prevent the slowing down of the project the captains were told that the amount spent on the oratory had to be increased from 10 to 20 percent of the budget⁹⁷⁾. By the early 1390s the lunettes over the windows were finished and glass added, thus completing the process of converting what had once been an open-air loggia into an enclosed space⁹⁸⁾. Painting the interior could now be begun without the risk of building work spoiling the paint⁹⁹⁾. Smeraldo and Ambrogio di Baldese were employed to decorate the walls and ceilings and in 1398 Lire 700 was voted by the captains for completing the project¹⁰⁰⁾. Pressure was also put on the guilds to treat more seriously their patronage of the pilasters inside the oratory. The Consuls were requested to remove the old altarpieces and to replace them with frescoes. In 1392, for example, the Signoria ordered the Arte dei Corazzai and Spadai to choose a pilaster on which to paint the image of their patron saint, St. Zanobius¹⁰¹⁾.

The laws passed in the 1380s suggest that the Priors were attempting to redefine the role of Or S. Michele. Their main priority had become the construction of the oratory. The result was that the money available for alms was reduced considerably, especially as testamentary obligations and ordinary running costs had first to be met from the same source. This new official policy was bound to have repercussions on the company's reputation. If members of the public saw a decline in the confraternity's role as a charity, they would have been less inclined to leave money and bequests to the Madonna. In an effort to encourage devotion the Commune supplied its own pipers and trumpeters to play in the oratory

on Saturdays and festivals¹⁰²⁾. However, according to Sacchetti this had little effect for the public had already begun to transfer its allegiance away from Or S. Michele to other Madonnas who were more independent of the State¹⁰³⁾. The degree to which this affected the captains' ability to succour the poor will be seen in the next section.

3 (ii) Or S. Michele's charity, 1380-1399

The central decade of this period, 1384-1393, has been described as "il momento peggiore per i salariati urbani" between the mid-fourteenth and mid-fifteenth centuries and compared with conditions in the 1340s¹⁰⁴⁾. The cost of living increased enormously in these years, with rises in the price of all staple products such as grain, wine, meat, oil and firewood. For example, between 1380 and 1399 the average price of grain only three times fell below 20 soldi a staio and nine times exceeded 30 soldi¹⁰⁵⁾. On the other hand, there was very little variation in the level of salaries¹⁰⁶⁾, which consequently dropped in real terms. The labourer could now expect with the same nominal wage to buy a third less and to be able to support only himself and one other adult¹⁰⁷⁾; if he had children to feed, he was likely to fall into indigence¹⁰⁸⁾. On top of this there was a series of plague attacks. The first was in 1383 and was followed by others in 1390 and 1399-1400¹⁰⁹⁾.

In this situation there must have been a considerable demand for Or S. Michele's charity. However, given the history of the company's finances as outlined above, it seems doubtful that there were sufficient funds available for the large number of people who were reduced to poverty in the 1380s and 1390s. Indeed the pressure exerted on the captains by the Priors to finish the oratory made it difficult to reconcile their disparate interests, as is indicated by an entry in their

deliberations from April 1381¹¹⁰):

E di questo lavoro [i.e. the oratory] usiamo discretione
in però che sono povere persone.

Table 7.6 suggests that while the captains did make every effort to modify their charitable policy to help the indigent, they were hampered from doing so efficiently both by the lack of funds and by the inflexibility of their own system which the captains seemed reluctant to modify. (See following page.)

TABLE 7.6 Or S. Michele's charity, 1380-1389 (in lire di piccioli)

Period	Dowries L. %	Churches L. %	City L. %	Cloth L. %	Misc. L. %	Total L. %	Monthly Av. L.
1380: 1.v-19.x	1169 32.4	119 3.3	1629 45.1	679 18.8	10 0.4	3606 100	644
1380-81: 2.xi-31.i	1685 21.4	288 3.7	2213 44	3668 46.6	19 0.3	7873 100	2624
1381: 13.ii-30.iv	60 20.2	44 14.8	193 65	- -	- -	297 100	119
1383: 4.v-27.xi	443 13.3	58 1.7	1536 46.9	1262 38	- -	3319 100	503
1388-89: 31.vii-30.viii	875 9.7	213 2.4	6427 71.4	1486 16.5	- -	9001 100	750

(Source: OSM 12-16 and 209)

The variation in the amounts which were given to the poor can be seen clearly in the final column. The overall monthly average for the 1380s was at the same level as the previous decade¹¹¹⁾, distorted, however, by the large sum handed out in the winter of 1380-81. The sources give no idea why so much money was suddenly made available. The only explanation, apart from sudden enrichment through inheritance, was that funds had been released temporarily after the completion of the arches of the oratory¹¹²⁾. Never again was charity so high. The only period when alms even approached these figures was during the weeks immediately after the law of 1388, when the Priors had complained of the lack of charitable activity¹¹³⁾. In December, for example, Lire 2714 was distributed¹¹⁴⁾, compared with a monthly average of only Lire 162 in September¹¹⁵⁾.

It is significant for the company's future development that the very provision which had jolted the captains into providing more poor relief should also have laid down that a fifth of the total income should henceforth be devoted to the oratory¹¹⁶⁾. This suggests that at least in the short term it was possible to combine a more realistic charitable programme with construction. But this was only achieved through selling property¹¹⁷⁾, and therefore produced a fixed sum which when exhausted resulted in the virtual cessation of alms¹¹⁸⁾.

Given that the amount of charity was often determined by outside factors¹¹⁹⁾, we can gauge how the captains adapted their policy in accordance with the changing needs of the poor by examining the way in which money was assigned to different categories. The pattern we observed in the 1370s is largely repeated in this decade. In 1380, before the depression really set in, the company spent up to 32.4 percent on dowries, but only 9.7 percent in 1388-89 when prices of all basic foodstuffs had risen considerably¹²⁰⁾.

Instead of young girls, subsidies were given to men and women who had been enrolled under the city-wide system. At the height of the recession, in 1388, 71 percent of alms went to these people compared with

only 45 percent in the summer of 1380. This decrease probably reflected the captains' desire to reserve their limited funds for those who were suffering most at the height of the depression, and partly the effect of the law of 21 October 1388, which had forbidden the captains from giving dowries in excess of 40 soldi¹²¹⁾.

The worsening economic crisis also meant that churches were to receive much less than in earlier decades: about 3 percent compared with 20 percent in the 1360s and 10 percent as recently as 1378¹²²⁾. Once again this represented the end of a phase for, as will be remembered, churches in the 1350s had been particularly favoured by the confraternity. The other form of charity initiated after the Black Death was cloth distribution, which continued to play an important part in many of these years, accounting for up to 46.6 percent of alms in the winter of 1380-1381.

When we focus our attention on the company's limosina per la città in the 1380s, we find that as the cost of living rose the captains distributed their alms more widely:

TABLE 7.7 Distribution of Or S. Michele's city-wide charity by percentage, 1380-1388

<u>9.viii.1380</u>	Lire 1-5	Lire 6-10	Lire 11--5	Lire 16-20	Lire 21--25	Lire 26-30	Lire 31+	% Total
Dowries	6.1	22.4	4.1	12.2	6.1	-	-	51
Women	4.1	8.2	6.1	6.1	-	-	-	24.4
Men	14.3	6.1	-	-	2.1	-	-	22.5
Churches	-	2.1	-	-	-	-	-	2.1
Total	24.5	38.8	10.2	18.3	8.2	-	-	100
<u>26.vi.1383</u>								
Dowries	-	-	-	-	-	1.2	-	1.2
Women	35.6	12.6	2.3	-	1.2	-	-	51.7
Men	20.7	20.7	3.4	-	-	-	-	44.8
Churches	-	2.3	-	-	-	-	-	2.3
Total	56.3	35.6	5.7	-	1.2	1.2	-	100
<u>1.x.1388</u>								
Dowries	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Women	44.4	7.9	1.6	-	1.6	-	-	55.6
Men	28.6	9.5	3.2	-	-	-	-	41.2
Churches	-	3.2	-	-	-	-	-	3.2
Total	73	20.6	4.8	-	1.6	-	-	100
<u>1.xii.1388</u>								
Dowries	-	0.8	2.3	-	0.8	-	1.5	5.4
Women	22.9	11.4	7.6	-	3.8	-	-	45.8
Men	16.8	19.1	5.3	1.5	2.3	-	2.3	47.3
Churches	1.8	-	-	-	-	-	0.8	1.5
Total	40.5	31.3	15.2	1.5	6.9	-	4.6	100

(Source: OSM 12, 15, 16 and 209)

The distribution of charity followed the overall pattern observed in Table 6. At the beginning of the decade girls received 50 percent of the company's alms towards their dowries, but this dropped drastically with the onset of the plague in 1383¹²³⁾ and the rise in the price of wheat after the poor harvest¹²⁴⁾. Instead funds were diverted to adult paupers, although it should be noted that men received almost as much as women, in contrast to the 1350s when the latter had received up to 87 percent of alms¹²⁵⁾. This move towards equalising the charity between the sexes had already begun in the 1360s¹²⁶⁾, and can probably be related to the tendency to give larger subsidies to a more select clientele. As we shall see in the final section, Or S. Michele came to give alms to artisan families in which the main breadwinner was recorded in the company's charity registers rather than the bereaved mothers or wives who had been helped in an earlier period.

These records also note the paupers' parishes so that one can analyse the way in which the captains distributed their aid:

TABLE 7.8 Distribution of Or S. Michele's charity, 1380-1388

	1380.9.viii		1383.26.xii		1388.1.x		1388.1.xii	
	Paupers		Paupers		Paupers		Paupers	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
S. Spirito	9	19.1	15	17.2	7	11.1	19	14.2
S. Croce	2	4.3	4	4.6	2	3.2	6	4.5
S.M. Novella	2	4.3	7	8.1	5	7.9	3	2.2
S. Giovanni	10	21.3	34	39.1	8	12.7	16	11.9
Contado	20	42.6	25	28.7	18	28.6	62	46.3
Hosp./Mons.	4	8.5	2	2.3	2	3.2	1	-
Anon.	-	-	-	-	21	33.3	23	20.9
Total	47	100	87	100	63	100	135	100

(Source: OSM 12, 15, 16 and 209)

The pattern of charity to the city had not changed much since the previous decade with the emphasis being placed on the same six poor parishes in the quarters of S. Spirito and S. Giovanni¹²⁷⁾. The main innovation in the 1380s was that subsidies to the country had been reintroduced. As in the 1340s¹²⁸⁾, the contadini households were the worst affected by the depression. The decade had begun with particularly poor harvests and by 1383 53 percent of heads of contadini households were categorised as too poor to pay taxes¹²⁹⁾. In August 1380, 42.6 percent of Or S. Michele's subsidies went to the country, reflecting the peasants' need after a bad harvest and months without rain¹³⁰⁾. But in October 1383 more funds were given to Florence, for the effects of the plague were probably worse within the confined space of the city, and only in December 1388 did the contado return to receiving 46.3 percent of the charity. Bad weather during the winter and summer had once again ruined the harvest, so that in the following year the price of grain jumped from 28 soldi to 43 soldi a staio¹³¹⁾.

Unfortunately none of Or S. Michele's records survive for the 1390s. It would have been interesting to know whether the level of alms dropped with the slight amelioration of conditions in 1393¹³²⁾. However, a petition from the captains in the previous year suggests that the company was giving out so much charity that the treasurers could not pay their debts. The Priors returned to their recently established policy and replied that no alms could be given until after creditors had been satisfied. Moreover, hinting at the possibility of fraud, the captains were told that in future before distributing money to the poor they had to swear on the Host that the disbursements would be done honestly¹³³⁾.

One of the most striking features of the history of Or S. Michele between 1380 and 1399 was the extent to which the Commune had come to direct the company's affairs. The excuse which was used

by the Priors for their intervention was that the captains were either embezzling the funds or else were so incompetent in administration that the confraternity fell constantly into debt. Quite how seriously one should take these accusations is not clear, although it should be remembered that there were many opportunities for captains to favour their own clients, given that under the new system high sums were given to a select number of people who were chosen by the captains themselves.

On the other hand, the Government did need an excuse to intervene in the company's affairs in order to ensure that the oratory was completed. The Commune had by now a vested interest because Or S. Michele was a place of public worship and the centre of public festivals which were important to the guilds and the Signoria. The extent to which this communal interference had deadened the cult of the Madonna by the early fifteenth century can be judged in the last documented phase of the company's history from 1400 to 1433.

4 (i) The Florentine Government and company finance, 1400-1433

The attitude of the Priors towards Or S. Michele had not changed since the previous decade. They were less concerned about the decline of Or S. Michele's charity than the completion of the oratory¹³⁴⁾ and preventing the captains from holding office simultaneously in the Commune and the confraternity¹³⁵⁾. However, by 1416 the Government had once again recognised the company's deteriorating condition¹³⁶⁾:

Considerantes dicti Capitanei quemadmodum dicta societas a certo tempore citra, multum in devotione et reputatione defecit, adeo quod ipsi amplius quasi nihil relinquitur quod praesertim hoc evenit ex mala elemosynarum dispensatione, et pro non habuisse ad dicte societatis servitia homines qui de ea diligenter gesserint curam.

The problems of the 1380s had evidently not disappeared: the public's devotion to the shrine had continued to decline as had the reputation of the company, partly at least because of maladministration. Income from the public's oblations and the sale of candles was so reduced that even less money was available for alms. The remedies were essentially those proposed in the laws of the previous thirty years. The most important were enshrined in the Statutes of 1415¹³⁷⁾. They act as a useful summary of official attitudes towards the confraternity in the early fifteenth century and show that the Government still considered the company's charity to be of some importance. The overall purpose of these clauses of the Statutes was to emphasize the captains' fiscal responsibility in the interests of the poor whom they were to assist. The Statutes began by outlining the laws relating to the election of captains and establishing that no more than five administrative officers and eight musicians could be employed¹³⁸⁾. Then passing on to the subject of bequests, the Priors laid down that when the company inherited a legacy the creditors of the estate should first be paid to avoid complaints against appropriation of funds which did not rightfully belong to Or S. Michele¹³⁹⁾. When property was involved, the goods could only be sold if they had been advertised from three to fifteen days beforehand¹⁴⁰⁾.

From the proceeds, 20 percent went towards the maintenance of the oratory and the rest was to be given to the poor¹⁴¹⁾. Care had to be taken about how alms were distributed in order to avoid accusations of fraud, and the majority of captains had to be present when decisions were taken about the poor¹⁴²⁾. Furthermore the company gained a new function: a quarter of the income was to be used to buy millet for making bread for the starving¹⁴³⁾.

Over the next decade the Government continued to show interest in the company's finances. Shortly after the suppression of Florentine confraternities in October 1419¹⁴⁴⁾, a law was

introduced to take over and distribute all their property¹⁴⁵⁾. Although there is no evidence to suggest that Or S. Michele was affected, only seven years later the State required each company to submit a detailed inventory of all its possessions to the Catasto officials. Or S. Michele, in common with other religious institutions, was exempt from paying tax¹⁴⁶⁾. However, because the Government now had a detailed record of the company's assets, any confraternity was made more vulnerable if any future government decided to appropriate ecclesiastical property, as had happened at the time of the War of the Eight Saints¹⁴⁷⁾.

The Catasto records also act as a useful guide to the state of Or S. Michele's finances in the late-1420s and show how wealthy the company still was in this period. The following two tables summarise the company's income and expenditure:

TABLE 7.9(a) Or S. Michele's income in 1429 (in Lire di piccioli)

Period	Heirs		Candles		Masses		Oblations		Property		Monte		Debtors		Total
	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.
1429	442	3.4	7500	58	83	0.6	335	2.6	1596	12.3	1048	8.1	1929	15	12933

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TABLE 7.9(b) Or S. Michele's expenditure in 1429 (in Lire di piccioli)

Period	Commem. obligations		Laudesi		Other salaries		Festivals		Wax & oil		Charity		Building		Heirs		Misc.		Total		Total Income	Balance
	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	L.
1429	432	5.3	516	6.3	2064	25.1	72	0.9	540	6.6	360	4.4	1660	20.2	2408	29.3	160	1.9	8212	100	12933	4721

(Source: Catasto 190, ff 138r-147r; Catasto 291, ff 72r-74r)

Or S. Michele was still the single most affluent confraternity in Florence, with a capital worth 14,947 florins¹⁴⁸⁾, which was only 3188 florins less than the combined assets of the two other large charitable organisations in the city, the Misericordia and Bigallo¹⁴⁹⁾. Moreover Or S. Michele found itself in the unusual position of not being in debt; it had a balance of 4721 florins.

The company's largest source of income was from the sale of candles, which indicates that even with a steadily declining reputation Or S. Michele was still important as the centre for guilds' festive activity. However, the way in which the income was constituted is significant, for nearly half derived from profits on selling the stub-ends of the candles and the wax left by guildsmen on their festivals¹⁵⁰⁾. This underlines the importance of the guilds for the maintenance of the cult of the Madonna. In earlier periods, by contrast, the public's oblations had formed a substantial contribution to the company's budget¹⁵¹⁾. In 1429, on the other hand, oblations constituted only 2.6 percent of the company's total income and this sum included the value of cloth left by merchants for distribution to paupers¹⁵²⁾.

The lack of revenue from oblations suggests how much devotion to the Madonna had diminished; only Lire 15 had been left by the public during the whole of 1429¹⁵³⁾. But this is hardly surprising given the history of Or S. Michele over the previous eighty years. The vast inheritance from the Black Death had led to an equally large expenditure, which was dictated increasingly by the Government. The company's charitable activities had flourished as long as there was revenue from bequests, but the ever increasing expenses of constructing the oratory had gradually eaten into any liquid assets available for the poor. By 1429 charity came to represent only 4.4 percent of the company's expenses.

Even if Or S. Michele had lost many assets by the early fifteenth century it still had substantial sources of income. The company

owned a considerable amount of property in the city and contado, producing a total annual rent of Lire 711 and 885 respectively. Another substantial source of income was interest from the Monte Comune on shares worth 4058 florins¹⁵⁴⁾. However, no money had been received from the latter for the period 1423-1429, perhaps because payments had been reduced as the result of the high cost of waging war¹⁵⁵⁾. But the Commune was not the only body to owe money to Or S. Michele; nearly 15 percent of the company's income was missing. Twenty debtors, the majority of whom were tenants, had reneged on their rents and the others were heirs who had failed to pay money from bequests.

This points to one of the main problems for any confraternity, which was that even if a tenant failed to pay his rent the company could not opt out of paying the salaries of the priests who had been hired in advance to say the commemorative masses. While only 5.3 percent of Or S. Michele's expenditure was on these chantry priests, the company's own employees accounted for 31.4 percent¹⁵⁶⁾. The staff included both those who maintained the cult and the administrators. The former consisted of 9 chaplains, who said mass throughout the year, two cherici who served at the altar, and friars who sang Mass when the captains entered office. Professional musicians were also employed: the laudesi who sang each evening, three instrumentalists- two viola players and an organist- and for the Feastday of St. Anne, the communal pipers and trumpeters. The only full-time employee was a sacristan who was paid 36 florins a year, which was equivalent to the annual salary of an unskilled labourer in the building trade¹⁵⁷⁾.

There were only two other significant payments. One was for the construction of the oratory, which at 20.2 percent of the company's expenses was exactly the amount stipulated by the Commune¹⁵⁸⁾. The other was a substantial sum paid to the heirs

of a testator, who had recently left a large bequest to be administered by Or S. Michele. These figures make an interesting comparison with the company's last available account book for September 1370-February 1371¹⁵⁹⁾. Sixty years earlier heirs had received 59 percent instead of 29 percent of the expenditure, while 20 percent was spent on charity and none on the oratory. The difference between the way income was divided indicates the diminution of the company's interest in the poor and the Government's determination that the oratory should be finished without depriving heirs of their inheritance. But the Catasto return of Or S. Michele does not provide more than a survey of the company's main income and expenses for one year. We will therefore turn to the records of Or S. Michele to examine the policy towards the poor during the thirty years since the beginning of the century.

4(ii) Or S. Michele's charity, 1400-1433

Recent research has emphasized that the period from 1400 to 1433 was characterised by a steady rise in the standard of living. The average price of grain was 19 soldi a staio and only three times did it exceed 25 soldi¹⁶⁰⁾. As in previous periods, other staples such as wine, meat, firewood and oil tended to follow the same pattern¹⁶¹⁾. Salaries, on the other hand, continued to rise, most markedly in the case of the skilled labourers and maestri¹⁶²⁾. However, long series of apparently favourable price and wage levels should not be allowed to obscure individual cases of hardship caused by illness, epidemics or the high level of unemployment which was characteristic of pre-industrial Europe. There were three attacks of plague in the first two decades of the fifteenth century, those in 1400 and 1411 being made worse by very lean harvests¹⁶³⁾. The first to succumb were always the poor, who according to contemporaries were literally dying of hunger¹⁶⁴⁾. Even in times of more general prosperity, if somebody fell ill and was unable to work, both he and his

family suffered. There were also a considerable number of paupers, who lived on the very edge of subsistence, constantly on the move in search of food and employment. However, one cannot calculate how many fell into this category, since without a fixed place of residence they failed to appear in tax records.

There remained, therefore, a definite need in the early Quattrocento for a company such as Or S. Michele. But, as can be seen from the following table- and in contrast to Table 6- the amount of charity had fallen since the 1380s:

TABLE 7.10 Or S. Michele's charity, 1402-1415 (in lire di piccioli)

Period	Dowries		Churches		City		Cloth		Grain		Misc.		Total		Monthly av.	
	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	%	L.	
3.xi.1402-7.ix.1403	122	5.2	22	0.9	1571	67.4	616	26.5	-	-	-	-	2331	100	233.1	
8.xi.1403-?.xi.1404	379	70.6	6	1.1	152	28.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	537	100	44.8	
1.i.1409-23.xi.i.1411	282	18	38	2.4	877	56	63	4	221	14.1	85	5.5	1566	100	130.5	
1.viii.1412-27.x.1413	2734	34.5	1124	13.7	1645	21	1278	16.4	180	1.5	1010*	12.9	7971	100	1302	
1.xi.1414-31.v.1415	96	22.1	100	23	229	52.6	10	2.3	-	-	-	-	435	100	33.5	

* = sums paid to prisoners.

(Source: OSM 17-24)

There was considerable variation in Or S. Michele's alms-giving from one year to the next, depending presumably on the vagaries of the company's income and the captains' priorities. The captains' complaint in 1416 that there was little money at their disposal, because of the decline of the public's devotion to the Madonna¹⁶⁵⁾, was a comment which might have been equally well applied to any year in the fifteenth century. Charity was the first thing to be affected by lack of revenue and there was only one year in which large sums were distributed to the poor: 1412-1413. But this cannot be attributed to a sudden decision to give all money in alms, but rather stems from two bequests, the most significant of which was 800 florins left by Luca di Giovanni Cambi¹⁶⁶⁾.

The reasons that the captains chose particular types of pauper in this period are not very clear. There was, however, a tendency to increase the amount given on the limosina per la città in years when the harvests were bad. This can be seen, for example, in 1409-1411 when an epidemic combined with the price of wheat rising to as much as 60 soldi a staio¹⁶⁷⁾. For the first time since the 1347 famine the company had even donated part of its income to buying grain for the poor¹⁶⁸⁾.

The company also benefitted financially from the plague. It was left bequests, the most substantial of which was Cambi's 800 florins. The way in which alms was distributed in that year partly at least reflects the terms of Cambi's will, for 150 florins were left for the purchase of cloth and 150 florins for the release of prisoners from the Stinche. However, an additional 300 florins were to be given to the poor and pious institutions which were chosen by the captains¹⁶⁹⁾. Therefore the individuals who appeared in the company's records may be taken to reflect the policy of Or S. Michele and will be studied as such.

It is indicative of how the captains viewed the company's role as a charitable institution in the early fifteenth century that, despite their awareness of the widespread poverty in the city and contado¹⁷⁰⁾, they continued to give alms to a very restricted clientele. A total of Lire 7971 was distributed among only 538 people. An individual received on average Lire 14.5, which, even after taking into account that 21.2 percent of these funds went on dowries, represented an increase over the amounts given to the poor in previous decades¹⁷¹⁾. This sum could be expected to feed a family of four for over six weeks¹⁷²⁾. One can therefore appreciate how the captains could use their influence to benefit their friends and may help to explain why the Priors should have accused the officials of corruption in 1416¹⁷³⁾.

Notwithstanding the fact that the circle of people from which Or S. Michele's paupers were drawn was limited, the types who were chosen for subsidies do give us a good idea of whom the captains considered to be most in need of help in 1412-1413. (See Table 7.11 on following page.)

TABLE 7.11 Types of people aided by Or S. Michele,
28.xi.1412-30.v.1413

Females	Nos. of people	%
i Dowries	114	21.2
ii Widows:	60	11.2
sick/poor	15	2.8
iii Daughters	38	7.1
iv Nuns and tertiaries	15	2.8
v Poor	16	3
vi Sick	15	2.8
vii Women and family	3	0.6
viii Others*	78	14.5
Total	354	66
Males		
i Friars and priests	7	1.3
ii Sons	18	3.4
iii Prisoners	26	4.8
iv Poor	23	4.3
v Sick	12	2.2
vi Men and family	11	2.1
vii Others*	83	15.4
Total	180	33.3
Churches/convents	4	0.7
Total	4	0.7
OVERALL TOTAL	538	100

* = names only are given.

(Source: OSM 20)

Or S. Michele had now returned to giving twice the amount of charity to women than men. The highest percentage of the money to the former went to supply dowries for girls, although individual payments were never more than a few florins. Widows were also picked out for the company's special attention. By selecting these two categories as the main recipients of alms, the captains were partly following a practice which had been in operation since the Black Death¹⁷⁴⁾ and partly the dictates of Cambi's will.

Among the more general attributes which were used to describe men and women were "poor" and "sick", both of which had traditionally denoted indigence or an inability to work¹⁷⁵⁾. Poverty was also the main reason for incarceration in the Stinche, and prisoners were each given an average of 6.2 florins towards paying for their release. In addition to the information about these broader categories, the records also give the profession of one in five of the 539 people who were subsidised by the company in the winter to spring of 1412 to 1413¹⁷⁶⁾:

TABLE 7.12 Trades represented among paupers aided by Or S. Michele,
28.xi.1412-30.v.1413

Cloth-workers	Male	Wife	Daughter	Total
Trimmer (cimatore)			1	1
Wool merchant (lanaiuolo)	2			2
Carder (cardatore)	2	2		4
Doublet-maker (farsettaio)			1	1
Doublet-maker's assistant (lavoratore per un farsettaio)	3		2	5
Wool-comber (pettinatore)	1	2		3
Burler (riveditore)	2			2
Carder of floss silk (stracciauolo)	2			2
Silk merchant (setaiuolo)		1	1	2
Dyer (tintore)		2		2
Washer (purgatore)			1	1
Broker (sensale)	1	1		2
Total	13	9	6	27
Other trades				
Priors' servant (famiglio)	4		1	5
Shoe-maker (calzolaio)	5	1		6
Wax-worker (ceraiolo)	1			1
Baker (fornaio)	1			1
Baker's assistant (lavoratore per un fornaio)	1			1
Servant (famiglio)	1			1
Butcher (beccaio)	1	1		2
Labourer (lavoratore)	7	3	8	18
Stone mason (maestro lapido)			3	3
Coppersmith (calderaio)	1			1
Or S. Michele employees	9		2	11
Blacksmith (fabbro)	1	1		2
Cabinet-maker (legnaiolo)	4		2	6
Harness-maker (sellaio)	1			1
Slipper-maker (pianellaio/zoccholano)	2		1	3
Hospital director (spedalingo)	1			1
Porter (portatore)	1			1
Locksmith (chiaviauolo)			3	3
Undertaker (beccamorte)	3			3
Gardener (ortolano)		1		1
Belt-maker (coraggiaio)	1			1
Unidentified	1	1	1	3
Total	46	8	21	75
Overall Total	59	16	27	102

(Source: OSM 20)

For the first time since the Black Death, Or S. Michele's records enable one to specify the type of people who made up the company's clientele. Evidently they were no longer from the lowest levels of society. Virtually all the men who were listed in Table 12 were small mastercraftsmen or shopkeepers.

A fairly wide variety of trades were represented among this sample. About 25 percent were engaged in some aspect of cloth manufacture, hardly surprising when so many Florentines were employed in this industry. The textile trade had been in decline since the late 1370s, and the 1427 Catasto is full of the laments of proprietors of wool shops who could not find anybody to rent their premises¹⁷⁷⁾. Significantly these potential tenants are the people who appear among the paupers aided by the confraternity. Seven of the twelve categories were small independent masters with their own workshops. At the top of the hierarchy were four merchants: two lanaiuoli who had been imprisoned for debt, and two setaiuoli, one of whom was described as in "maxima necessita"¹⁷⁸⁾. But most of the paupers were more humble and included cronners, carders, washers of woolen cloth, and dyers. There were also day-workers such as wool-combers, burlers, and carders of floss silk¹⁷⁹⁾. The majority were, then, either minor guildsmen or sottoposti.

Artisans from the same level of society also predominated among the seventy-seven people from outside the textile trade. The majority were small masters, who were employed as shoe-makers, coppersmiths, harness-makers, key-makers, and carpenters. But a few others were from a more elevated status, such as master masons and butchers. Others came from service occupations and included porters, servants and gardeners, eleven of whom were employed by Or S. Michele itself. The records are not clear on whether these men had originally been hired because they were impoverished, like the "ministro vecchio che spenge i moccholi" in the oratory¹⁸⁰⁾, or the

occasional subsidy was regarded as one of the advantages of the job. In any case the majority were employed only part-time so that they could work elsewhere to make up a full salary¹⁸¹⁾.

TABLE 7.13 Geographical distribution of Or S. Michele's charity,
28.xi.1412-30.v.1413

Area	No. of Subsidies	%
S. Spirito	79	14.7
S. Croce	41	7.6
S. Maria Novella	43	8
S. Giovanni	121	22.5
Total in city	284	52.8
Contado	188	34.9
Hospitals/monasteries	12	2.2
Anon. (parishes not given)	54	10.1
Total	254	47.2
Overall Total	538	100

(Source: OSM 20)

The charity registers of 1412-1413 also indicate that Or S. Michele was following the practice established in the 1380s¹⁸²⁾ of giving a substantial sum to the inhabitants of the contado, which had become increasingly impoverished¹⁸³⁾, particularly after the recent famine and plague¹⁸⁴⁾.

The pattern of distribution in the city had changed little

over the past thirty years, for the quarters of S. Spirito and S. Giovanni continued to receive a higher per capita subsidy than either of S. Croce or S. Maria Novella. However, a difference does become apparent when examining the distribution according to parish. During the Trecento an increasing amount of alms had been given to six parishes between the second and third walls of the city¹⁸⁵⁾. By 1412-1413 only 17.8 percent of the limosina to the city, instead of 43.5 to 61.7 percent, went to these areas¹⁸⁶⁾. The rest was scattered among twenty-seven other parishes. There is no reason to suppose that the poor had suddenly moved to other parts of the city in the late fourteenth to early fifteenth centuries¹⁸⁷⁾. Rather an explanation must be sought in the type of clientele. Instead of concentrating on the paupers who traditionally lived in six main parishes of the quarters of S. Spirito and S. Giovanni, the confraternity now gave a third of its charity to small mastercraftsmen whose homes were scattered throughout the city. While the results from one year cannot be taken as any more than an indication of the direction of Or S. Michele's charitable policy in the fifteenth century, recent research on the Buonomini di S. Martino also suggests that other companies were concentrating their attention on similar types of people¹⁸⁸⁾.

Conclusion

During the early decades of the Quattrocento Or S. Michele was involved principally in maintaining a public cult, constructing an expensive oratory, administering property, and ensuring that commemorative obligations were fulfilled. The activity for which the company had earlier been best known, the distribution of alms, was however almost non-existent by 1429. Although we have attributed 4.4 percent of income to charity (see Table 9(b)), 88 percent of this sum was spent on one dowry¹⁸⁹⁾. The only amount given to the needy poor was for the purchase of 52 staiora of grain, in conformity with the dictates of the 1415 Statutes¹⁹⁰⁾.

It is odd that the tax return had not included the Lire 1.5, which the captains distributed as a symbolic gesture to the poor every Saturday¹⁹¹). Why the figure was absent is not clear. What is significant is the omission itself, indicating how little importance eleemosynary activity had assumed by the third decade of the fifteenth century.

If the Catasto of 1429 is at all accurate, the captains had completely reversed their traditional policy towards the poor. A century earlier the main function of Or S. Michele had been to identify and help the really needy sections of the population, to which end up to 81.5 percent of income had been devoted¹⁹²). Literally thousands of paupers had been aided throughout the city and contado and starving crowds were fed during famines.

The Government's influence had undoubtedly been crucial in this development. The Provvisione of 1329, which had diverted communal funds into the confraternity's coffers, was the first of a whole series of privileges which helped Or S. Michele to maintain its role in the fourteenth century as the main charitable organisation of Florence. These laws also provided a model for official intervention on an unprecedented scale after the Black Death. The Government came to direct the confraternity's charity to provide a more specialised service for those people who had been worst affected by the plague. In response Or S. Michele diversified its functions, for in addition to the limosina per la città, substantial sums were made available for widows, dowerless girls, and minors. Then as the company's income fell over the decades, the captains were forced to become more selective and consequently change the focus of Or S. Michele's charitable activities. Gradually funds came to be distributed in larger amounts to a smaller clientele, partly in response to Government intervention, and partly under the influence of testators.

We should not, however, underestimate the importance of Or S. Michele's devotional activities and see the company as simply a large philanthropic institution. The confraternity had, after all, originated in order to serve and promote the cult of the Madonna. Distribution of alms was a secondary function, which emerged because of the popularity of the miraculous image. Nonetheless the character of the devotion, much like the character of charity, changed over the decades, moving away from the model of other laudesi societies.

The company became more public, especially after 1343 when Or S. Michele was selected as the centre for the commemoration of the expulsion of the Duke of Athens. From that date on the guilds were also important for the continued popularity of the shrine, as they celebrated their feastdays at the oratory and then paid for the frescoes and later statues of their patron saints to adorn the oratory.

We can therefore talk about the "decline" of the confraternity in relation to the lessening vitality of the cult of the Madonna as the company changed from a private into a public organisation. But the development which we have traced was actually more complicated. The vast sums which were inherited after the Black Death led to the creation of a large bureaucracy in order to deal with litigious heirs and the enactment of the terms of testaments. Moreover, the Commune, seeing the value of such a rich institution, used it as a bank from which to borrow money and subsidise the building of churches in Florence. But the construction project which involved the company in the largest expense was the Palace of Or S. Michele, for which the confraternity itself had to pay from the early 1360s. The captains now had to divide a more limited budget between charity and the

oratory. This coincided with a period of falling income, especially after the damaging accusations against officials of maladministration and misappropriation of funds had led to a reduction in the public's gifts of oblations and bequests. The combination, therefore, of increasingly complex responsibilities, high expenditure, shrinking assets, and a tarnished reputation made Or S. Michele a very different confraternity in the early fifteenth century than 100 years earlier.

Footnotes

1. Provv. Reg. 48, ff 31r-v: 12.ix.1360: La Sorsa, 258-259. The outcome of this investigation were the registers which formed the basis of our discussion on charity in the 1350s: see Chapter 6.
2. The penalty was 1000 florins which was to be shared between the company and the Commune: Provv. Reg. 48, f 62v: 21.x.1360: La Sorsa, 259.
3. See OSM I (bis.)-4.
4. Villani, XI, 57. See also for 1375-76 Stefani, 745. These rises can be traced in OSM 460-463 and 470 (mostra 48) and are summarised in Chapter 4, Table 4.
5. Provv. Reg. 51, ff 7r-v: 21.viii.1363. The law also applied to the Misericordia, the Bigallo, the hospitals of S. Maria Nuova, S. Gallo and S. Maria della Scala, and "alia religiosa et pia loca de civitate Florentie". See also Trexler, "Florence, by the grace of the Lord Pope", 168-169.
6. The sum was to be repaid within twenty months, La Sorsa 260-261. Cf OSM 3, f 22r: 14.vii.1363: on 14 July the company treasurer was authorised to pay to the operai of S. Reparata up to 1000 florins within the following twelve months.
7. For example the 4000 florins given towards the construction of St. Anne: Provv. Reg. 36, ff 140-141r: 20.vii.1349 and Provv. Reg. 38, ff 100v-101v: 12.viii.1350.
8. Provv. Reg. 53, ff 47r-v: 14.x.1365: La Sorsa, 261.
9. This Provvisione is printed by La Sorsa, 260, but without reference to either day or month. I cannot trace it in either Provv. Reg. 50 or 51 which cover 1363.
10. Provv. Reg. 53, f 122v: 12.iii.1366: La Sorsa, 261.
11. Ibid., ff 122v-123v: La Sorsa, 261-262.
12. Provv. Reg. 53, f 122v: 12.iii.1366: La Sorsa, 261: "pro bono pauperum et utilitate et comodo dictis sotietatis".
13. Provv. of 1363 in La Sorsa, 260: "Item considerantes offitiales prefati incongruum inhonestumque...".
14. Brucker, Florentine Politics and Society, 196. Other measures included increasing the number of prestanze and taxing the Church.

15. OSM 56: the register runs from 1.ix.1366 to 29.x.1369.
16. OSM 56, f 33v: 5.iii.1367.
17. OSM 56, f 36r: 23.iii.1367: "Feciono sindacho il camerlengho della compagnia a potere ricievere i danari del Monte e i danari delle ghabelle delle porti".
18. Between 7.vii.1366 and 6.i.1367 the gate ghabelle produced Lire 267,651: De La Roncière, "Indirect taxes", Table 1, opp. 160.
19. OSM 56, f 33v: 5.iii.1367 it was recorded that Monte income should go to the operai of the oratory and tabernacle: "stanziarono detto di ch'el camerlingho della compagnia paghi agli operai dell'oratorio per ispendere e convertire nel tabernacolo dell'oratorio fiorini novantanove d'oro soldi 9, cioè le due paghe che saranno del Monte per lo mese di Maggio a Giugno prossime passati...". See also OSM 3, f 10r: 4.vi.1365, a deliberation that money found in the cassette should be paid to the oratory treasurers.
20. OSM 56, f 37v: 2.iv.1367. The passage is quoted or discussed in I. del Lungo, Miscellanea fiorentina di erudizione e storia II, n. XIV, 31-32; Franceschini, L'oratorio di Orto S. Michele, 59-60; La Sorsa, 105.
21. OSM 56, f 37v.
22. Brucker, Florentine Politics and Society, 206-211.
23. OSM 56, f 37v: 2.iv.1367. See also Prov. Reg. 44, ff 117r-v: 17.iv.1357, La Sorsa, 256-257.
24. Oblations from the Arti in 1360 were over lb. 1000, and in 1364 lb. 775: La Sorsa, 83, based on OSM 221, 224, and 227. La Sorsa, 83, n.1, prints a list of the eighteen Arti which made oblations 25.iii-27.xii.1360.
25. Corradi, Annali delle epidemie, 221.
26. OSM 55, f 50r: 22.vi.1367: "che si faciesse fare una tenda per l'oferte dell' Arti che fosse di lunghezza quanto è lungho il palagio e largha quanto tutta la via. La quale sia di borrhaccio tinto in azzurro chon gigli gialli seminati entrovi". A year later the captains authorised another substantial expense for the preparations of the procession of 24 July, which was to renew the gold frieze around the image of the Madonna: "Che l'ariento del fregio ch'era intorno al velo di Nostra Donna dell'oratorio si venda a chi più ne darà perocch' è vecchissimo. E che di que'danari se n'avrà, o vero di parte, se ne faccia un altro in altra maniera come parrà loro". The veil was sold for Lire 86.13.10d on the same day: OSM 55, f 104v: 15.vi.1368.

27. De La Roncière, Florence, centre économique, I, 494-46.
28. H. Hoshino, "La produzione laniera nel Trecento a Firenze", Il Tumulto dei Ciompi, 50.
29. De La Roncière, Florence, centre économique, IV, 458. See Stefani, 707, 712, 723 and La Cronica Domestica di Messer Donato Velluti, scritta fra il 1367 e il 1370, ed. I. del Lungo, G. Volpi (Florence, 1914), 269. The price of grain rose to 55 soldi a staio in 1369 and to 66 soldi by 1370.
30. Goldthwaite, The Building, 436-437.
31. The 420 florins were spent on constructing a tetto a cavalletti, painting the Chapter General and helping to build a new chapel. See OSM 3, f 3v: 6.v.1365; f 8r: 16.v.; ff 8r, 15r: 14.vi and 21.vii. The chapel was probably the Cappella Maggiore, which the captains had discussed in early June 1365: OSM 3, ff 17v-18v. Cf Paatz, Die Kirchen von Florenz, III, 188-303. For an explanation of the term tetto a cavalletti, see A. Schiaparelli, La casa fiorentina e i suoi arredi nei secoli XIV e XV (Florence, 1908), 17.
32. Grain was 15 soldi a staio: Goldthwaite, "I prezzi", 33, and skilled labourers earned 14.5 soldi a day: The Building, 437.
33. M. Villani, XI, 57 and Prologue to Filippo Villani, XI, 81; Corradi, Annali delle epidemie, I, 219-220.
34. Corradi, Annali delle epidemie, I, 220.
35. OSM 56, f 33v: 5.iii.1367.
36. Very occasionally the original system was revived, as on 28.x.1367: "A Chiaro Benvenuti...Lire 20 per dare per Dio minutamente a più poveri dove diranno due de' capitani". (OSM 56, f 66v.)
37. OSM 5, ff 3v-6v.
38. Goldthwaite, The Building, 436.
39. De La Roncière, Florence, centre économique, I, 415. The cost of food was Lire 7.18s.0d, and another Lire 2.4s.0d would have to be added to cover the cost of rent and clothing.
40. Corradi, Annali delle epidemie, I, 221 quoting Donato Velluti.
41. For wages see Goldthwaite, The Building, 436-437; grain was 12.9 soldi a staio: De La Roncière, Florence, centre économique, IV, 458.

42. See Chapter VI, section 4(iv).
43. See, for example, the entry on l.v.1367: "Stanziarono detto di Lire 420 piccioli per dare per Dio e per limosina à quelle persone e chiese e luoghi nominate per li detti capitani...": OSM 56, f 43r.
44. Provv. Reg. 65, ff 153r-v: 29.viii.1377: La Sorsa, 264-265.
45. Ibid.
46. On the plague see Stefani, 745. The text of the law is in OSM I, ff 44v-45r, but is not dated. I have been unable to trace it in the relevant volumes of the Provv. Reg.
47. T. Kuehn, Emancipation in Late Medieval Florence (New Brunswick, 1982), 116.
48. Provv. Reg. 36, f 3r: 29.viii.1348.
49. See Chapter 6, Table 1. From February to March 1349 heirs were given from 87.1 percent to 95.4 percent of the company's budget, receiving Lire 6267 and Lire 5732 in each month.
50. See above, Table 7.1.
51. See OSM (1333), cap. X, ff 8v-9r.
52. Ibid., cap. XXII, f 12v.
53. OSM 6, f 2r: 10.v.1370. On Or S. Michele's musical life see F. A. D'Accone, "La compagnia dei laudesi in Firenze durante l'ars nova", 277-278.
54. OSM 10, f 26v: the company recorded Lire 420 from oblations on 19.ix.1376, although it should be borne in mind that this figure was probably artificially inflated by the increased income of all shrines during the Interdict of Florence: Trexler, The Spiritual Power, 127-128.
55. In 1370 the company sold Lire 2460's worth of wax: La Sorsa, 67.
56. See Chapter 6, Table 6: candle-sales for 1354-56 varied between Lire 4268 and 6508 per annum and oblations in August-December 1353 were Lire 640.
57. Passerini, Storia, 431. Operai had been elected in 1370 and 1372, but there are no more records for subsequent years: OSM 7, ff 19v-20r and OSM 8, f 7r.
58. De La Roncière, "Les conditions des salariés", 26.
59. Stefani, 745.

60. Stefani, 746; Corradi, Annali delle epidemie, I, 226.
61. Goldthwaite, "I prezzi di orano", 33.
62. Ibid., 33.
63. De La Roncière, "Les conditions des salaríes", 27-29.
64. Ibid., 20-21.
65. De La Roncière, Florence, centre économique, I, 445. Compare, though, the figures of Goldthwaite, The Building, 436-438. He sees only a marginal change in wage-rates between 1371 and 1378. The lowest is in 1374 when unskilled labourers were paid 7.5 soldi per day and skilled 15.8 soldi.
66. Passerini, Storia, 431.
67. Goldthwaite, The Building, 436.
68. De La Roncière, "Les conditions des salaríes", 32-34.
69. On the plague see Stefani, 745.
70. De La Roncière, "Les conditions des salaríes", 27: Table 11. Prestanze had been imposed annually since 1373, but the highest, of 400,000 florins, was in 1376.
71. Provv. Reg. 65, ff 153r-v: 29.viii.1377: La Sorsa, 264-265.
72. De La Roncière, Florence, centre économique, III, 1298, 1301.
73. Provv. Reg. 65, ff 153r-v.
74. Exceptions include: 12 friars, 2 notaries, a sword-maker, a doublet-maker's daughter and some female Tertiaries and widows.
75. J. Newton, "Poverty and charity in Late-medieval Florence", Chart 10; and see above Chapter 5.
76. Chapter 6, Table 12.
77. Barbadoro, "Finanza e demografia", 624-629.
78. One should remember that parishes were not all the same size. S. Lorenzo, for example, was virtually synonymous with the Gonfalone of the Leon d'oro, and by 1427 contained 11.4 percent of the city's population: Herlihy, Klapisch, Les Toscans, Table 7, 123.
79. These sections correspond to Clusters I, II, and V in Samuel Cohn's analysis of Florentine popoli: The Laboring Classes, 27, 119.

80. E. Fiumi, "Fioritura e decadenza dell'economia fiorentina", A.S.I., CXVI (1958), 498.
81. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 666-669, and esp. 668.
82. Stefani, 814.
83. The average monthly payment in the 1360s was Lire 453, and Lire 984 in the 1370s: compare Tables 1 and 4.
84. G. Pinto, "I livelli di vita dei salarati cittadini nel periodo successivo al Tumulto dei Ciompi (1380-1430)", Il Tumulto dei Ciompi, 181.
85. Provv. Reg. 70, f 44v: 26.iv.1381: La Sorsa, 265.
86. Provv. Reg. 70, f 243r: 18.ii.1383: La Sorsa, 267.
87. Provv. Reg. 70, f 243r: 18.ii.1383.
88. Some evidence for the Priors' accusations is found in one of Or S. Michele's records: on 15 February 1381 one of the captains, Balsinello, was denounced by his colleagues for maliciously subverting charitable funds: OSM 14, f 5r. Two months later Balsinello was thrown out of the company (Ibid., f 40r), a comparatively rare event for Or S. Michele.
89. Provv. Reg. 70, f 243r: 18.ii.1383.
90. Provv. Reg. 73, f 200v: 21.ii.1385: La Sorsa, 269.
91. Ibid.
92. Passerini, Storia, 431 based on information contained in OSM 12 and 14. Fransceschini, L'oratorio di S. Michele in Orto, 69-70 says that the Arti underwrote the expenses of decorating the windows on the ground floor and the Signoria those on the first floor.
93. Provv. Reg. 73, f 201r: 21.ii.1385: La Sorsa, 269.
94. Provv. Reg. 77, f 170v: 21.x.1388: La Sorsa, 271; Provv. Reg. 81, f 101v: 21.vi.1392: La Sorsa, 273.
95. Provv. Reg. 75, f 64v: 20.vi.1386: La Sorsa, 270.
96. Provv. Reg. 77, f 170v: 21.x.1388.
97. Provv. Reg. 77, ff 170v-171r: 21.x.1388: La Sorsa, 271.
98. Paatz, Die Kirchen, IV, 498.

99. La Sorsa, 105-106.
100. Provv. Reg. 86, ff 33Or-v: 11.ii.1398, also in OSM 1, ff 65v-67r. Cf OSM 14.
101. Passerini, Storia, 443.
102. From 1388 the Priors supplied their own pipers and trumpeters to play in the oratory on Saturdays and the main company feastdays: Provv. Reg. 77, f 171r: 21.x.1388: La Sorsa, 272. The donation of oblations seems to have been very sporadic. The deliberative records of the company only record the following for the 1380s: Lire 188 for the period 14.iii.-8.v.1380 and Lire 555 for 14.vii-25.ix.1380: OSM 12, ff 6r, 62r.
103. "Lettera a Jacopo di Conte", Delle novelle di Franco Sacchetti, ed. F. Umberti (Florence, 1724), II, 229.
104. G. Pinto, "I livelli di vita", 181.
105. Ibid., 166. Also see the comments of Cronica volgare di anonimo fiorentino già attribuita a Piero di Giovanni Minerbetti, ed. E. Bellondi, RRIISS, new ed., XXVII.pt.II (Città di Castello, 1915-1918), 1385.xvi: "lo staio del grano valse continuamente da quaranta a cinquanta soldi"; 1389: xxviii: "Questo anno fu molto caro il grano in Firenze, alcuna volta valse lo staio lire tre".
106. Pinto, "I livelli di vita", Tables 11, 12 and 13: 196-98. Af also Goldthwaite, The Building, 436.
107. Pinto, "I livelli di vita", 178.
108. Ibid., 180-181.
109. For 1383: Stefani, 955.
110. OSM 14, f 35r: 3.iv.1381.
111. See above Table 7.4: average Lire 984 in 1370s compared with Lire 928 for 1380s.
112. Passerini, Storia, 431.
113. Provv. Reg. 77, f 170v: 21.x.1388: La Sorsa, 271.
114. OSM 209, ff 31v-33r, 34r-39r.
115. OSM 209, ff 18r-20r.
116. Provv. Reg. 77, ff 170v-171r: 21.x.1388: La Sorsa, 271.
117. This had been done in 1385: Provv. Reg. 73, f 200v: 21.ii.1385: La Sorsa, 269.

118. Although Lire 600 was distributed in May and July (OSM 16, f 26v, 30v) none was recorded in either April or June.
119. Most important was the necessity to pay for the oratory and give heirs their inheritance. But also fraud seems to have played a genuinely important role. One of the Or S. Michele captains, Balsinello, was even accused of fraud by his colleagues and then expelled from the company: OSM 14, f 5r (14.ii.1381), f 41r (9.iv.1381). The Provvisione of 26.iv.1381, according to which the Commune took over the election of the company's scribe and accountant, may be linked to the discovery of Balsinello's activities: Provv. Reg. 70, f 44v: 26.iv.1381.
120. Pinto, "I livelli di vita", 188-194. Grain, for example, ranged between 33.4s to 38.6s a staio.
121. Provv. Reg. 77, f 17v: 21.x.1388: La Sorsa, 272.
122. See above Tables 7.1 and 7.4.
123. See Stefani, 955.
124. Pinto, "I livelli di vita", 188.
125. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 691.
126. See above, Table 7.2.
127. See above, Table 7.5. The parishes were: S. Felice-in-Piazza, S. Felicita, and S. Frediano in S. Spirito; S. Lorenzo, S. Pier Maggiore and S. Michele Visdomini in S. Giovanni. Charity to these parishes was 43.5 percent (1380), 61.7 percent (1383); 58.3 percent (1388); 55.9 percent (1388). Significantly the captains gave the most charity at the height of the plague of 1383.
128. See Chapter 5, section 4.
129. De La Roncière, "Pauvres et pauvreté", 665.
130. Ser Naddo, "Memorie storiche", Delizie degli eruditi toscani, ed. P. Ildefonso di San Luigi (Florence, 1778), XVII, 31.
131. Ser Naddo, "Memorie", Delizie, XVIII, 98; Cf Goldthwaite, "I prezzi", 330.
132. Pinto, "I livelli di vita", 166, 172, who takes 1393 as the end of the really bad period, despite the famine of 1397-98 and the plague attack in 1399-1400.
133. Provv. Reg. 81, f 102v: 21.vi.1392: La Sorsa, 273.
134. Cf OSM 17, 18, 210, 257, as well as OSM 260-1 dealing specifically

with oratory expenses. In January 1410 the captains decided to spend 300 florins "in ornamentis oratorii et in complendo ecclesiam S. Michaelis in Orto" and then another 100 florins on the sacristy. (OSM 18, f 8v) In addition to painting and decorating, the captains bought devotional objects, such as crucifixes and candle-sticks to adorn the inside of the oratory: OSM 17, f 3r: 14.xi.1402: "unam crucem argenti et duos candellieros argenteos pro oratione altaris dicti oratorii".

135. OSM 1, ff 70v-71r: ?.ix.1408, although it does not appear in Provv. Reg. 97 under September 1408. The law also applied to the captains of the Misericordia and Bicallo.
136. Provv. Reg. 107, f 312v: 20.ii.1416. Quoted in Passerini, Storia, 420.
137. Statuta Populi et Communis Florentiae ('Friburgi', 1778-83), III, 348-361.
138. Statuta 1415, III, 351-353.
139. Statuta 1415, III, 354.
140. Statuta 1415, III, 358-59.
141. Statuta 1415, III, 354.
142. Statuta 1415, III, 355.
143. Statuta 1415, III, 356-57. This provision was probably introduced at a time of famine, although there are no references in surviving Or S. Michele records to distribution of millett. Repeated in Provv. Reg. 107, f 312v: 20.ii.1416.
144. Provv. Reg. 109, ff 160r-162v: 19-20.x.1419.
145. Provv. Reg. 112, f 5r: 23.iii.1420.
146. Herlihy, Klapisch, Les Toscans, 151-152.
147. Brucker, Florentine Politics and Society, 304, 317-318.
148. Catasto 291, f 72r.
149. Catasto 291, f 68r: 18,085 florins.
150. Catasto 190, f 145v: "Dalle cassette dello oratorio dove si mettono i moccoli che spengono... lb. 1600 di cera"; "Dalle offerte dell'arti: lb. 1400 di cera".
151. Cf Chapter 5, Table 1(a) and Chapter 6, Table 6.

152. Catasto 190, f 145v: "Panni e stala che sono offerti da mercatanti...flor. 80".
153. Catasto 190, f 145v: "Danari che sono offerti nelle cassette dell'oratorio".
154. The confraternity also had 25 florins invested in the Monte dei Prestanzoni: Catasto 190, f 146r.
155. In fact the correct amount of interest on Or S. Michele's holdings for one year would have been Lire 638. The Monte Comune paid 3.75 percent and the Monte dei Prestanzoni 6 percent: Molho, Florentine Public Finances, 102.
156. This included the normal employees and the laudesi and musicians.
157. Goldthwaite, The Building, 436.
158. Statuta 1415, III, 354.
159. See above, Table 7.3.
160. Goldthwaite, The Building, 33.
161. Pinto, "I livelli di vita", 167-70.
162. Pinto, "I livelli", Table 11, 196: median daily salary for agricultural workers in 1401-1407: 9.9s; 1408-1421: 10.1s; 1422-1430: 10.4s; for maestri in the same periods: 18.2s, 18.3s and 20.4s. Cf also Goldthwaite, The Building, 436-437.
163. Brucker, The Civic World, 170 for 1399-1400; Corradi, Annali delle epidemie, I, 252 for 1411; Brucker, The Civic World, 414 for 1417. Prices of grain in Goldthwaite, "I prezzi di grano", 33, although this table does not reflect the fact that grain is supposed to have reached 60 soldi a staio in 1411-12: Brucker, The Civic World, 401.
164. Brucker, The Civic World, 322-323. In a pratica of June 1417 counsellors described the poor as "dying of hunger": Ibid., 401.
165. Prov. Reg. 107, f 312v: 20.ii.1416.
166. OSM 20, ff 10r (10.xi.1412); 110r (28.i.1413).
167. Pinto, "I livelli di vita", 188. Brucker, The Civic World, 322 gives the price of a staio of wheat in November 1411 as 50 soldi and in the following July as 60 soldi. On the plague see Corradi, Annali delle epidemie, I, 252.
168. This change of policy may have been the result of a Government order, which was then included in the 1415 Statutes: Statuta,

1415, III, 356-357.

169. OSM 20, f 10r: 150 florins for cloth to make 110 tunics for the poor; 150 florins for debtors imprisoned in the Stinche prison and other "miserable people"; 300 florins to the poor and pious institutions; 200 florins for Or S. Michele.
170. See for example the captains' deliberation of 28.i.1412: "Prefati domini capitanei...consideraverunt ad impotentiam et maximam pauperem plus et plus hominum et personarum civitatis et comunis et districtus florentia...": OSM 20, f 110r.
171. For May 1367 see above Table 7.2 and 1380-1388, Table.7.7.
172. Pinto, "Il personale, le balie e i salariati dell'Ospedale di San Gallo di Firenze negli anni 1395-1406", 159, calculated that a family of two adults and two children consumed lire 9's worth of food per month.
173. Provv. Peg. 107, f 312v: 20.ii.1416.
174. See Chapter 6, section 5(iv).
175. "Indigence" rather than "pauvreté" is the term used by Charles de la Poncière: "Pauvres et pauvreté", 662.
176. The 102 individuals are: 59 males and 43 females. The professions are, however, all of the male head of household. I have assumed that a woman collected on behalf of the whole family.
177. H. Hoshino, L'Arte della Lana in Firenze nel Basso Medioevo, 205-206, 231-233.
178. OSM 20, f 95r.
179. For types of textile workers see F. Edler de Roover, Glossary of Medieval Business Terms. Italian Series, (Cambridge, Mass., 1934).
180. Catasto 291, f 72v.
181. See above in discussion of Table 7.9(b) .
182. See above Tables 5 and 8. In the 1380s contado had received 28.8-46.3 percent of the company's alms.
183. Herlihy, Klapisch, Les Toscans, 165-173.
184. Brucker, The Civic World, 322.
185. See discussion of Table 5 above and Newton, "Poverty and charity", Chart 10 for 1324.

charity", Chart 10 for 1324.

186. Ninety-six subsidies went to the following parishes: in S. Spirito: S. Felice in Piazza, S. Felicita, S. Frediano; In S. Giovanni: S. Lorenzo, S. Reparata, S. Pier Maggiore and S. Ambrogio.
187. Cf Cohn, The Laboring Classes, 117-121, who sees a movement of the popolo minuto between the mid-fourteenth and late fifteenth centuries towards what he calls the outer "ecological ring" of the city. However, as mentioned before, it is not entirely clear whom he considered the poor since his poorest category were able to afford dowries up to 50 florins. It should also be noted that the six parishes, which Or S. Michele considered as the poorest in the fourteenth century, straddled both Cohn's "peripheral" and "inner" rings.
188. A. Spicciati, "The 'poveri vergognosi' in fifteenth-century Florence", 141-42, 144, and map opposite 127.
189. Catasto 291, f 74r: a dowry of 112 florins was paid to the wife of a man who had made Or S. Michele his executor.
190. Statuta 1415, III , 356-57.
191. For example, OSM 210, f 4v: "29.iii.1404: a poveri di Cristo per iv sabati del mese di febraio e iv del mese di marzo Lire 12".
192. Cf Chapter 5, Table 3.

CHAPTER 8

Confraternities and Charity in Quattrocento Florence

The most noticeable feature of the system of poor relief in fifteenth-century Florence was the inactivity of the large charitable companies, which had dominated the provision of alms in the previous century. While this may be partly linked to the improvement in the standard of living for many of the poor¹⁾, one should also take into account the internal development of the institutions themselves. We shall, therefore, look at the evolution of the Misericordia and Bigallo to discover whether they shared the declining fortunes of Or S. Michele. Although these three groups were the main organisations to have given charity in the Trecento, other small devotional companies had provided a limited amount of aid, and we shall examine their development in the fifteenth century in relation to the newer foundations such as the Buonomini di S. Martino and the confraternities of artisans.

1 The Misericordia and Bigallo

The Misericordia²⁾, according to Matteo Villani, inherited 25,000 florins in 1348-49³⁾ and, as with Or S. Michele, the Government moved in almost immediately to control elections and to borrow

significant sums of money⁴⁾. The company itself spent what remained of the inheritance on building and decorating a new oratory and residence on the Piazza di S. Giovanni⁵⁾. It is difficult to say whether this use of funds meant a decline in the amount of charity given to the poor, since we know nothing about the company's activities in the first half of the century. But the records for the 1350s and 1360s do indicate that expenditure on charity was not substantial. The captains, as we have seen, distributed small amounts of money and grain or tunics, to "povere persone" chosen by the captains⁶⁾.

In 1407 the Misericordia captains took on a new function. They decided to keep a register of every child and adult who was baptised at S. Giovanni because⁷⁾

in civitate Florentie nascuntur multi pueri maschuli et
femine et quod de eorum nativitate et natione, et eorum
progenie et de numero ipsorum nulla mentio habetur, nullaue
scriptura de eis fit...

However, by 1428 even this activity became less essential, because the Commune itself passed a law which made it mandatory for all citizens, who were eligible for communal office, to register their date of birth at the Baptistry⁸⁾. Then in 1450 this requirement was extended to the whole population of Florence⁹⁾. The result was that by 1436 the company had ceased to keep a record of baptisms¹⁰⁾.

The next important piece of information which survives about the Misericordia, apart from the 1419 Prohibition of Confraternities, which had little effect¹¹⁾, was the provvisione of 1425 which united the company with the Bigallo¹²⁾. However, before examining the clauses of the law we will look at the development of this second company.

The history of the Bigallo in the fourteenth century is even more shadowy than that of the Misericordia¹³⁾. Evidently the company's main function after the Black Death was the administration of nine hospitals in the city and contado¹⁴⁾. An inventory of 1379 suggests that the company had suffered from the depredations of the Otto de'Prete during the War of Eight Saints, because the Commune still owed the company 1325 florins from the property which had been appropriated¹⁵⁾.

A more complete idea of the Bigallo's finances emerges from an account book from 1400-1401:

TABLE 8.1 Income and expenditure of the Bigallo, 1.iv.1400-24.iii.1401 (in Lire di piccioli)

INCOME

Period	Heirs %	Candles %	Masses %	Oblations %	Property %	Monte %	Debtors %	Misc. %	TOTAL %					
1400-1401	41	3	-	-	922	67.7	377	27.7	-	-	6	0.4	1363	100

EXPENDITURE

Period	Commem. Obligs. %	Laudesi %	Other Salaries %	Festivals %	Wax + Oil %	Charity %	Building %	Heirs %
1400-1401	76 6.7	- -	169 14.8	8 0.7	399 29.7	8 0.7	379 33.1	69 6.04

Hospital Expenses %		Misc. %		TOTAL %		BALANCE
87	7.6	8	0.7	1143	100	214

(Source: Bigallo 651, ff 2r-8v; 12r-17r)

The company had a relatively small budget in the early fifteenth century compared, for example, with Or S. Michele, which in 1429 had an annual income of ten times that of the Bigallo¹⁶⁾. One of the main reasons for this discrepancy was that the latter was not the centre of a public cult and therefore lacked the income from candle-sales and the public's oblations. Instead the bulk of the assets were in the form of property and shares in the Monte Commune. Although the records do not indicate whether the company was ever repaid for the property which had been confiscated by the Otto de'Prete during the 1370s, the size of its holdings in the public debt suggests that compensation may have been in the form of shares rather than cash payments¹⁷⁾. However, the largest single source of income (67.7%) was rent from the property which supported the hospitals.

The Bigallo's expenditure, on the other hand, shows some differences from Or S. Michele's. The two largest expenses were wax and oil and building. The 30 percent which was spent on the first is somewhat surprising for a charitable society, but reminds us forcefully that poor relief should always be seen within the context of devotion. Much of the wax was probably taken up for commemorative services, but at least a third was burned at the Bigallo's weekly masses of peace, celebrated to promote harmony among the citizens¹⁸⁾.

However, one should take into account that the sum spent on wax may have been unusually high because it included expenditure from the months 18 June 1399 to 3 February 1400 when the Bianchi processions passed through Florence. Their main message was also peace and reconciliation¹⁹⁾.

The confraternities of the Misericordia, Bigallo and Or S. Michele can hardly be said to have justified their reputation as charities in the early fifteenth century. Instead each one spent considerable sums on building, and decorating their oratories²⁰⁾. The captains of the Bigallo spoke for each society when in May 1417 they described the condition of their confraternity²¹⁾:

che considerando essi capitani chella detta compagnia
da certo tempo in qua assai è venuta meno e mancata nella
sua divotione et reputatione, per modo che quasi più
nulla v'è lasciato; e che in gran parte di questo è di
cagione le elemosine male dispensate...

This passage is part of a petition to the Priors, whom the captains had approached so that steps should be taken to prevent the company from being ruined²²⁾. The Priors replied that the distribution of alms should be carried out honestly and only when there were sufficient funds to prevent the company from falling into debt. New rules for electing the captains and other leading officials were laid down in order to stop favouritism and maladministration²³⁾. Furthermore in future the really important decisions could not be taken by the captains alone, but had to be shared with twenty-two arroti to include two representatives from the Parte Guelfa, two from the Mercanzia, two from each of the seven major guilds and four from the minor guilds. This expanded council had to be convened when, for example, the Spedalinghi of their hospitals were appointed, a notary, proveditor or treasurer was elected, or company property was sold or alienated for over five years²⁴⁾.

Despite the intervention of the Priors, the Bigallo continued to decline. In 1425 the Government attempted to provide a remedy for this situation by uniting the Misericordia and Bigallo²⁵⁾. The new company was to have eight captains, two from each quarter²⁶⁾, who were to share decision-making with the twenty-two arroti prescribed for the Bigallo in 1417²⁷⁾. Although each group was supposed to continue its activities as before, all official business was in future to be conducted in the Misericordia's oratory in Piazza S. Giovanni²⁸⁾.

Judging by the deliberative records, the following decades were not marked by any great improvement in the services provided by the new organisation. The major expenses were for salaries, masses of the peace, candles, festivals and testamentary obligations²⁹⁾. Small sums from bequests were distributed in alms, but the most important of the confraternity's functions was the administration of the Bigallo hospitals. Considerable sums were expended on maintaining the 150 beds³⁰⁾, paying the salaries of the staff, and

repairing not just the buildings themselves, but also the property which had been bequeathed for their maintenance³¹⁾. Further construction costs were also incurred in 1442 when the upper part of the oratory was burned in a fire. Although the repairs may have only taken a few weeks³²⁾, they led the way to an expensive programme of redecorating the whole Misericordia-Bigallo complex³³⁾.

The inactivity of the Misericordia in this period has been put down by many historians to the evil influences of the Bigallo captains, led by their treasurer Cosimo de' Medici³⁴⁾. This group is supposed to have taken over the running of the joint company and deprived the Misericordia of its role in burying the dead and carrying the sick to hospital³⁵⁾. However, there is no evidence to suggest that the Misericordia was performing either of these functions in the late Trecento. The company was probably so decadent that the stronger Bigallo captaincy, under the direction of Cosimo, merely re-directed the activities of the weaker organisation.

Two years after the merger, the confraternity had a joint capital of 15,751 florins, which was 3188 florins more than the company of Or S. Michele³⁶⁾. The relative wealth of the two companies speaks not so much of the size of the Misericordia-Bigallo's patrimony as the decline of Or S. Michele. The Catasto return of the united company is not, however, sufficiently complete to estimate how the capital was constituted, although the main elements must have been the property attached to the Bigallo's hospitals and the remnants of the Misericordia's inheritance from the mid-fourteenth century³⁷⁾.

The Commune, well aware that the captains might want to liquidate their assets in order to cover debts, outlined in 1437 the procedures they had to follow when alienating property³⁸⁾.

Three years later the Priors wishing to gain a tighter control of the company's finances, decided that in future the treasurer of Or S. Michele should also be the treasurer of the Misericordia-Bigallo³⁹⁾. In effect, then, the new company had come under the

direct control of the Republic, eighty years after Or S. Michele's treasurers had become de facto officials of the Commune⁴⁰⁾.

The only evidence that either company was performing any charitable services in this period was the election in 1447 of a "guardianus puerorum"⁴¹⁾. His job was to care for foundlings and orphans, a function for which the Misericordia had become famous. This is illustrated graphically by the Codex Rustici of c1448, which shows a member of the confraternity picking up a child in front of the oratory⁴²⁾. Towards the end of the century, efforts were made to activate another of the Misericordia's activities, the burial of paupers⁴³⁾. New statutes were drawn up in 1490⁴⁴⁾ and from this year we can date the revival of the company. The captains vowed that the company "non sia chosì spenta, ma ritorni più splendida e più chalda nell'opere della misericordia e charità"⁴⁵⁾. The confraternity was completely reorganised with a limit of seventy-two members, of whom thirty were to be priests⁴⁶⁾. Meetings were held twice a month and members were to be fined and eventually expelled for non-attendance⁴⁷⁾. A fairly close-knit organisation was therefore devised which revived the spirit of the Misericordia. The zeal of the brothers was soon put to the test for Florence was visited in 1497 by another epidemic⁴⁸⁾. The company had at last rediscovered its raison d'être, and from now on became the principal organisation in the city for burying the dead during plagues.

While the documentation for the Misericordia and Bigallo in the second half of the Quattrocento is sufficiently complete to indicate that the former was revived and the latter continued to administer hospitals, the records for Or S. Michele are virtually non-existent. Two books which cover parts of 1452-53 suggest that the company's charitable activities were even less vigorous than in the late 1420s⁴⁹⁾. The oratory did, however, continue as an important centre for guild festivals. Between 4 April and 31 August 1452 sixteen Arti celebrated their patrons' feastdays at Or S. Michele and were joined on 26 July by the Signoria and the captains of the Parte Guelfa for the feastday of St. Anne⁵⁰⁾. While the

sale of candles produced some income, an account book of the following year indicates that rent from property produced more⁵¹⁾. This went to pay for a large staff to maintain the cult, including 13 chaplains, 7 singers of laudi, an organist, a sacrestan, and 5 servants. The total salary bill on 8 March 1453 was Lire 478, which paid all the employees for periods ranging from one to three months⁵²⁾. Even with these expenses, the company made a profit of Lire 1,377 in the first part of 1453⁵³⁾.

Although Or S. Michele was the subject of a series of laws between 1430 and 1480, the Medicean government showed little concern about the lack of charity. The provisions instead dealt with other subjects. The most common reason for communal intervention was the regulation of elections. Not only were changes made in the terms of office for the more important officials, such as the captains, treasurers, provveditore and accountant⁵⁴⁾, but the Councils interfered with the appointment of the chaplains. The latter had to give a surety for 1600 florins before taking office, to guarantee that they did not walk off with the silver in the oratory⁵⁵⁾.

The possibility of fraud was also evident in other areas of the company's activities. For example, the captains were constantly reminded of the necessity to chase up debtors, and, in order not to lose track of the possessions, were told to keep a register listing all assets⁵⁶⁾. But what angered the Priors above all was the discovery in 1480 that the oratory was being used for purposes other than divine worship, most noticeably as a school for manual workers. In future all practices "contra honorem Dei" had to cease and the oratory was to be reserved exclusively for the cult of the Madonna⁵⁷⁾.

Therefore, during most of the Quattrocento none of Florence's three main charitable companies produced more than a minimal amount of alms. Or S. Michele was evidently now little more than a centre for the cult of the Virgin, kept alive by the support of the guilds and the Signoria. The united Misericordia and Bigallo,

on the other hand, merely acted as administrators of a series of hospitals and the guardian of a few lost children. Not until 1488 did the Misericordia finally break away from its sister company and re-establish itself as an important institution in its own right.

Given the decadence of these large charitable societies, it is relevant to enquire whether existing devotional confraternities changed their policy towards the poor or any new foundations appeared to compensate for the lack of active philanthropic institutions.

2 Laudesi and disciplinati companies and charity

The policy of both types of confraternity towards their own members had changed little since the Trecento⁵⁸⁾. However, the actual system for the distribution of charity had become more sophisticated. In the previous century the captains had usually visited a sick member, but now every group elected special "visitatori degli infermi", the larger ones employing an official for each quarter⁵⁹⁾. These men were accompanied by two company employees, "il medico spirituale, cioè il confessore" and "il medico corporale"⁶⁰⁾. The former had traditionally been among the visitors, but the latter was an innovation, becoming a standard feature in the second half of the century. The doctor was also paid a small annual fee, which in the 1480s-1490s was between Lire 12-15⁶¹⁾. His function was not just to minister to the sick, but also to decide whether the invalid was sufficiently ill to merit a subsidy⁶²⁾. While two flagellant companies would not pay anything unless the patient had a fever⁶³⁾, most recognised that any individual who could not work was likely to fall into indigence fairly quickly. The priest also had another role: to recommend that an individual should not receive a subsidy if he had failed to confess on the first visit⁶⁴⁾. The actual sum given to members throughout most of the century was not more than 30 soldi a week⁶⁵⁾. The nominal value was three times the contribution given in the early fourteenth century, but in real terms was only slightly higher⁶⁶⁾.

Although in the Quattrocento there were few innovations in the services which devotional companies provided for their members, there were some changes in their charity to outsiders. This was most evident among the new flagellant compagnie della notte, to which we shall turn after discussing the laudesi companies.

The majority of laudesi companies in the Trecento had shown little interest in the plight of the poor, except during crises. In the Quattrocento there was little change in their official policy, as outlined in the statutes, but in practice they inherited new sources of income, part of which was spent on paupers⁶⁷⁾. The compagnia di S. Zanobi, for example, distributed in 1441 part of the revenue from nine properties in the form of bread, small monetary donations and dowries⁶⁸⁾. In 1427 these sums amounted to 9 percent of the company's expenditure, whereas forty-five years earlier alms had represented 5.7 percent of a much smaller budget⁶⁹⁾.

Following the pattern of the previous century, the three laudesi companies meeting in the Oltrarno quarter of S. Spirito had a more vital charitable life than those in the north of the city. Records from the mid-1460s onwards indicate that the compagnia di S. Agnese, for example, had extended its activities. Each Christmas the company distributed 2046 loaves of bread among 1023 poor residents of the Gonfalone Drago⁷⁰⁾. The captains kept strict control of who received the bread by choosing the paupers and giving each one a name ticket with which to claim his loaf⁷¹⁾. The expense was underwritten partly by legacies and partly by the company, although between 1471 and 1492 one of the wealthiest members, Lorenzo de' Medici, made annual grants for the purchase of about 24 staiora of grain⁷²⁾.

Another function performed by the company was the donation of four to five dowries of Lire 25 to girls who were over sixteen years old and "di buona qualità e fama e di buona vita"⁷³⁾. Once again these alms were restricted to local residents, because recipients had to have been living in the Gonfalone of Drago Verde for at

least five years⁷⁴⁾. Finally the confraternity owned a small hospice in Piazza S. Maria del Carmine for six women, who were to be honest, poor and of a mature age⁷⁵⁾. The majority were widows aged between sixty to sixty-five and were always selected by the captains⁷⁶⁾.

Owing to a series of bequests, the two other major laudesi companies in the quarter of S. Spirito fulfilled fairly similar functions. The compagnia di S. Spirito ran a small hospice for widows, known as the Ospedale del Piccione⁷⁷⁾, in addition to the house for reformed prostitutes⁷⁸⁾. Curiously, though, the 1488 statutes of the compagnia di S. Frediano do not recall that the company had been founded to care for local paupers⁷⁹⁾. By the late fifteenth century, devotion appears to have been the members' main preoccupation, thus conforming to the traditional model of a laudesi society. The account books paint a slightly different picture, because although burial of the dead was no longer a central activity, testators had provided money for alms and dowries for the poor of the Gonfalone⁸⁰⁾. Indeed by the 1478 Catasto the compagnia di S. Frediano was donating 27 percent of its income to the poor, whereas fifty years earlier no alms had been registered in the confraternity's tax return⁸¹⁾.

The majority of flagellant companies, as we have seen⁸²⁾, were left few bequests, so that they had less money to spend on charity than the laudesi. Moreover their statutes show an almost complete indifference to the problems of paupers outside their membership⁸³⁾. Almost the only exception to the traditional disciplinati were the compagnie della notte⁸⁴⁾.

The reason that these new confraternities gave alms is explained by one of their statutes as follows⁸⁵⁾:

La sancta scriptura dice nel Vecchio Testamento
sichome l'acqua spengnie il fuecho, chosì la
elimosina spengie il peccato.

Charity was, like scourging the body, seen as another form of penance, which demonstrated to the world the sinner's intention to lead a more devout life. The way these four companies distributed alms was as similar as their ceremonies⁸⁶⁾. The process began with special officials, known as limosinieri, who searched the city for paupers worthy of their aid. Having once been identified each pauper was given a name ticket (polizza), which he or she presented once a week at the company's meeting-place. Despite the fact that these confraternities appear to have taken their duty so seriously, the sums given were very limited. The limosinieri distributed each week between three to five loaves of bread and a fiasco of wine to each of the five or six individuals who were on their books⁸⁷⁾. Thus although these companies might spend up to 64 percent of their income on charity, the actual amount rarely exceeded Lire 100 per annum⁸⁸⁾. In 1483, for example, the compagnia di S. Jeronimo gave each of their paupers food and drink to the value of Lire 21. 16s. 10d. a year⁸⁹⁾. This was the equivalent of forty-five days' work for an unskilled labourer in the construction industry or paid for 61 percent of one man's annual food bill⁹⁰⁾. A bachelor would have been helped considerably, but the majority of people who came to these companies for aid did so because they had large families of between three to nine children⁹¹⁾.

A subsidy of Lire 21. 16s. Od. a year would hardly have prevented starvation even for an individual, so one has to assume that, as in the case of Or S. Michele, the poor were receiving support from elsewhere. Indeed the way in which one compagnia della notte defined who should be aided suggests that most paupers were either members or relatives of one of the brothers⁹²⁾:

Queste limosine ordinarie di qualunque domenicha mattina si dispensino prima ne fratelli se alchuno ve n'e bisognoso. Non v'essendo si dia a proximi vicini dove sia vera povertà et honestà. Appresso manchando il primo o secondo obliço, s'abbi rispetto de' poveri vergognosi dovunque sieno tali che faccino grande la vostra picchola limosina.

When the statutes came to define more clearly who should be helped, they selected orphans and widows, who were the traditional recipients of confraternal charity⁹³⁾. However, in practice, only a few widows were given aid, and the majority were men with families⁹⁴⁾. The most detailed information about these types of people comes from the records of the Buonomini di S. Martino, although additional evidence is provided by the statutes of a series of confraternities of artisans.

'3 The Buonomini di S. Martino and the artisan confraternities

The Buonomini di S. Martino⁹⁵⁾ was one of the first lay confraternities in fifteenth-century Italy to specialise in aiding the poveri vergognosi or the shame-faced poor⁹⁶⁾. Traditionally historians have taken this term to mean impoverished members of the upper échelons of society⁹⁷⁾. However, the Buonomini's statutes of 1442 suggest a wider definition⁹⁸⁾:

quegli che non sono consueti a mendicare, et il sinistro che patischono molto colle loro famiglie.

In other words, these paupers might include anyone who was not an habitual beggar. Indeed the records of the company in the first thirty years of its existence, 1442-1472, indicate that the majority of their clientele were small master-craftsmen⁹⁹⁾. For example in May 1466 the single largest group (31 percent) were textile workers, suggesting that the Buonomini tried to respond to a definite need, since wool production was declining¹⁰⁰⁾. Although there was a growth of trade in the second half of the fifteenth century¹⁰¹⁾, the 1458 Catasto still

suggests that many of the woolworkers in the quarter of S. Spirito- the traditional residence for this type of artisan- were still living only just above subsistence level¹⁰²⁾. While a bachelor would doubtless have found his position tolerable, the majority of the Buonomini's clientele would have found themselves in grave difficulties because they were heads of households containing on average six children¹⁰³⁾.

The aim of the confraternity was not to provide permanent support for the traditional poor, or poveri pubblici, but rather to give aid to people who already had some assets and through temporary misfortune had slipped into indigence¹⁰⁴⁾. For example, the breadwinner might have fallen ill or even been imprisoned for debt. Women were also helped because they had been widowed or had been deserted by their husbands either for another person or in search for work outside Florence¹⁰⁵⁾. Other females on the Buonomini's books were reformed prostitutes and women in childbirth¹⁰⁶⁾.

While the reasons for aiding paupers may recall the practices of Or S. Michele in the previous century, various aspects of the Buonomini's policy were very different. Most striking was that women were given a much smaller proportion of the company's charity. In the 1350s 75 to 85 percent of Or S. Michele's alms went to a whole variety of females¹⁰⁷⁾. From 1466 to 1470 the Buonomini distributed only 22 percent of their alms to one type of woman, widowed heads of household¹⁰⁸⁾. No funds were made available for one of the traditional objects of confraternal charity, poor girls in need of a dowry. Another aspect which differentiated the Buonomini's policy from earlier companies was that they gave aid more frequently and for much longer periods to their clientele. In their first year, 1442, they helped 33 families or fed 155 "mouths"¹⁰⁹⁾. Moreover instead of just receiving subsidies once every few months, each of these families inscribed on the company's books in 1466 was given an average of 66 contributions¹¹⁰⁾.

There was also a difference between the type and amount of charity.

Or S. Michele had given single sums of money varying from a few soldi to Lire 5 or more if a dowry was involved¹¹¹⁾. The Buonomini, on the other hand, nearly always supplied small amounts of bread. In four separate years between 1442 and 1466 paupers were given each week two small loaves per head to families averaging 4.7 people¹¹²⁾. The size of the Buonomini's contribution to a family budget can be appreciated when considering that the average adult in fifteenth-century Florence consumed 650 grams of bread per day¹¹³⁾. Assuming that children were given a third of the amount of their parents¹¹⁴⁾, the Buonomini would have provided only 14.25 percent of the average family's weekly consumption of bread¹¹⁵⁾.

If there were enough artisans to benefit from these small amounts of charity, it suggests that some sections of the community-and particularly those connected with the woolen industry- were very susceptible to changes in both the general economy of the city and their own circumstances. Even though wages remained relatively stable during most of the fifteenth century¹¹⁶⁾, there was always a danger that the rise in the price of grain- which provided 64 percent of an adult's daily consumption of calories¹¹⁷⁾- or the illness of the head of household, might lead to indigence.

The precariousness of the lives of this level of Florentine would also seem to be suggested by the foundation in the fifteenth century of a series of companies associated with the textile trade¹¹⁸⁾. The Trecento had been characterised by communal and guild legislation which prohibited workers from forming any type of fraternity for worship, mutual aid or burial¹¹⁹⁾. The fear of those in authority was that the sottoposti would meet "sub religionis pretextu"¹²⁰⁾ to organise protests against their conditions of work or their exclusion from any effective voice in politics. The penalty for creating a fratellanza was death, as the carder Ciuto Brandini discovered in 1345¹²¹⁾. One result is that this type of company is particularly badly documented;

if records were kept they were dispersed when a group was disbanded. I have, however, found references to eight Trecento trade confraternities, two of which were associated with the textile industry¹²²⁾. The first was, from 1317, restricted to the linaiuoli and the second provided a place of worship for the Lucchese silk workers. Some trades, such as the Portatori di Norcia, built hospices for old or infirm members¹²³⁾, while others, like the painters, who met under the name of St. Luke, formed associations which were little different from ordinary devotional companies¹²⁴⁾.

The fifteenth century presents rather a different picture, not just because I have traced twelve new companies, but also because the majority were formed by wool or silk workers. For example, a group of silk weavers, the compagnia di S. Croce dei tessitori di drappi, began in S. Marco in 1405¹²⁵⁾. But perhaps more striking was the foundation of the compagnia di S. Andrea dei purgatori e cardatori in S. Candida in 1451. This company united two of the most unruly elements of the textile workers, carders and cleaners of wool. The statutes were vetted by the Consuls of the Arte della Lana to ensure that the sottoposti did no more than establish a charitable and devotional society¹²⁶⁾. Two further groups of textile workers were established within the next forty years, one of wool-shearers and the other of cloth-beaters; again both were given the official approbation of the Wool Guild¹²⁷⁾.

Another combination of interests arose when artisans from other cities or countries decided to unite together for worship and provide a system of social assurance. In addition to the Lucchese silk workers from the Trecento, in the next hundred years a company of Genoese was founded under the patronage of St. Sebastian in S. Frediano¹²⁸⁾ and the Venetian community established a Scuola¹²⁹⁾. Florence also attracted skilled workers from North of the Alps¹³⁰⁾; Flemish and German weavers established confraternities in S. Maria del Carmine, S. Salvatore di Camaldoli, and SS. Annunziata¹³¹⁾.

Each of these confraternities, whether made up of Florentines or foreigners, appears to have had much the same function, a combination of devotion and charity. The 1448 authorisation of the Flemish compagnia di S. Barbara, for example, describes the members as "huomini devotissimi et fedelissimi Cristiani"¹³²⁾ who "intendono et vogliano vivere in carità et opere di pietà et di misericordia fare in quanto possino"¹³³⁾. While Richard Trexler may be right in suggesting that any society of sottoposti might use their meeting for economic or political purposes¹³⁴⁾, one should not under-rate the importance of the religious and charitable activities. Apart from the annual festivals and provision of funeral services, many companies gave small amounts of charity to members of their trade, provided medical attention¹³⁵⁾, and founded small hospices in which the sick or old could take refuge should the need arise.

In Quattrocento Florence there were, therefore, a variety of confraternities providing alms. The majority, such as the laudesi and disciplinati and even the newer trade companies, were primarily concerned with their own members. Anybody who was outside the circle of religious and trade confraternities was forced to look elsewhere. But the large organisations, such as Or S. Michele and the Misericordia, which had dominated the provision of charity in Trecento Florence, were now virtually defunct. It was only with the foundation of the Buonomini di S. Martino in 1441 that paupers had an organisation to which they could apply in times of need. However, the type of alms given by the Buonomini was much more restricted than that administered by previous companies. Instead of concentrating on either the truly "miserable" or even the traditional paupers, such as minors or widows, money was given to artisan families who had become temporarily indigent. These were the forerunners of the nobler poveri vergognosi who in the sixteenth century were to become an elite category among the poor¹³⁶⁾.

FOOTNOTES

1. Richard Goldthwaite, The Building, 341-2 sees the fifteenth century as "the period of greatest prosperity for the working classes", while admitting that his conclusion is based entirely on a "statistical view of things".
2. The best survey of the history of the Misericordia is still Passerini, Storia, 440-482. See also the confraternity's own publication: U. Morini, Documenti inediti.
3. Villani, I, 7.
4. The provvisione of 13.viii.1348 is missing, but see copy in OSM 1, ff 27r-30r: Morini, Documenti inediti, 12-18; Provv. Reg. 36, f 36r: 19.xi.1348: Morini, 18-20; Provv. Reg. 39, ff 105v-106v: 9.iii.1352: Morini, 22-29; Provv. Reg. 40, f 51r: 28.i.1353; Provv. Reg. 53, f 47r: 13.x.1365: Morini, 39-41.
5. Passerini, Storia, 450-457 and H. Saalman, The Bigallo, 9-18.
6. Bigallo 2.II (1358-1366); Bigallo 2.III (1385-1387); Bigallo 724 (1362-1385). Also see introduction to chapter 5.
7. Bigallo 2.III, f 149r: 20.ii.1407: Morini, Documenti inediti, 45-46.
8. Herlihy, Klapisch, Les Toscans, 174 n.20.
9. Ibid., 182.
10. There is no record of baptismal registers in the 1436 inventory of the Bigallo residence: Bigallo 1668, ff 1r-2v.
11. Provv. Reg. 109, ff 160r-162v: 19-20.x.1419.
12. Provv. Reg. 115, ff 171r-181r: 23.x.1425: Morini, Documenti inediti, 46-52.
13. Passerini, Storia, 1-60 remains the only history of the company. See Ibid., 1-26 for the period until the end of the fifteenth century.
14. Bigallo 729: "inventario di tutti e beni immobili: novembre 1379".
15. Ibid., f 70v: "Il comune di Firenze de'dare alla detta compagnia fiorini 1325 d'oro per le possisioni che suoi ufficiali diputati sopra e beni de'preti venderanno di quelle della detta compagnia".
16. See Chapter 8, Table 9(a)..
17. If the Commune had followed the policy I have suggested, the 1325

florins' worth of Monte shares would have produced an annual income of Lire 253 at a rate of 5 percent. For interest rates see Molho, Florentine Public Finances, 69-70.

18. Lire 132.11s.0d was spent on these masses of peace between 18.vi. 1399 and 3.ii.1400: Bigallo 651, ff 12r-17r.
19. On the Masses of peace see BNF Magl. II.IV, 376, Magl. XXXVII.300, and Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 91-92.
20. We have already discussed the oratories of the Misericordia and Or S. Michele. For the Bigallo see Passerini, Storia, 9-12.
21. Provv. Reg. 108, f 76v: 26.v.1417: Passerini, Storia, 794-796.
22. Provv. Reg. 108, f 76v: "et desiderando ch'ella si mantengna et accrescha et non vada in ruina".
23. Ibid., ff 77r-v.
24. Ibid., f 77r.
25. Provv. Reg. 115, ff 179r-181r: 23.x.1425: Passerini, Storia, 796-798, Morini, Documenti inediti, 46-52.
26. The captains for 1425-26 are listed in Bigallo 5.1, f 3r.
27. The arrotti are in ibid., ff 3v-4r: 10.xii.1425.
28. Provv. Reg. 115, f 179r.
29. Bigallo 5.1, ff 5v-8v: 22.ii-1.vii.1426.
30. Catasto 291, f 68r: "per mantenere le letta di tutti i loro spedali che sono letta 150: fiorini 40".
31. See, for example, the expenses incurred to build and repair their hospitals and property in 1435-37: Bigallo 5.III, ff 7r-9r: Lire 393.16s.10d was spent on the Spedale di S. Lucia de'Magnioli alla Porta a San Friano (ff 7v-9r); Lire 39.7s.0d on the Spedale di San Lorenzo (ff 4r-12v).
32. Saalman, The Bigallo, 17.
33. Passerini, Storia, 23-26 and Saalman, The Bigallo, 19-31.
34. Passerini, Storia, 463; La Misericordia di Firenze, 46-47; Saalman, The Bigallo, 6.
35. La Misericordia di Firenze, 48, followed by Saalman, The Bigallo, 7.
36. Catasto 291, f 68r. Or S. Michele's assets amounted to 14,947 florins: Catasto 291, f 72r.

37. For the property in 1379 see Bigallo 729. Bequests to the Misericordia are listed for 1330-1400 in Bigallo 724 (Cria 9977). An incomplete record is also in Archivio della Arciconfraternità della Misericordia, MS 163, covering 1340 to 1364.
38. Provv. Reg. 128, ff 5v-6v: 11.iv.1437: Morini, Documenti inediti, 52-55.
39. Provv. Reg. 131, f 195r: 30.ix.1440: Morini, Documenti inediti, 56-57.
40. Provv. Reg. 53, ff 122v-123v: 12.iii.1366.
41. Saalman, The Bigallo, 25 quoting from Bigallo 737, f 137r, is the source for this statement, but is impossible to verify since the manuscript is flooded. However, the reorganisation of the Misericordia's function may date from the previous decade, for according to the catalogue of the company archive, Bigallo 737 is from 1431-33. The guardianus puerorum was definitely working for the company by 1447 as can be seen in a record of that year: Bigallo 746, f 166r: "Tommaso di Niccolò purghatore che ritiene i fanciulli smariti nela casa alato ala nostra residenza de'avere ogni anno staiora 12 di grano, 6 barili di vino per ritinere i fanciulli smariti".
42. Seminario Maggiore di Cestello, codex of Bartolomeo Rustici reproduced in Saalman, The Bigallo, Plate 7.
43. Bigallo 11.III, f 79r: 12.ix.1488: Morini, Documenti inediti, 58-59.
44. The 1490 statutes are in AMF, Cod. I, and printed by Morini, Documenti inediti, 59-72.
45. Morini, Documenti inediti, 59.
46. Ibid., 1490 statutes: cap. I, 60.
47. Ibid., cap. VI, 62-63; cap. viii, 63-64.
48. Corradi, Annali delle epidemie, I, 353 ff. There were also outbreaks in 1504 (Ibid., 366-68) and 1513 (Ibid., 384-85).
49. OSM 17 (bis): 4.iv.1451 to 31.viii.1451; OSM 262: 3.i.-12.vii.1453.
50. OSM 17 (bis), ff 1r-v: 4.iv.-31.vii.1452.
51. OSM 262, 3.i-12.vii.1453.
52. OSM 262, f 12r.
53. OSM 262, ff 12r, 22v.
54. Provv. Reg. 133, f 195r: 30.ix.1440; Provv. Reg. 142, ff 333r-334v: 10.xii.1451: in OSM I, ff 78r-79v; Provv. Reg. 158, f 197r: 23.x.1466.

55. Provv. Reg. 147, f 75r: 6.vi.1454.
56. Provv. Reg. 125, f 68r: 26.iv.1432; provvisone of 21.x.1460 in OSM 1, ff 84v-85r, but not in Provv. Reg. 160 under date.
57. Provv. Reg. 170, f 122r: 21.i.1480, discussed by Passerini, Storia, 439.
58. The confraternities' charitable policy towards their own members is outlined in the following statutes:
Laudesi: S. Zanobi (1427), cap. XVII, ff 46r-v; S. Croce (1485), cap. XII, f 27v, cap. XIX, f 31r; S. Frediano (1488), CRS I, cap. VI, ff 4r-v; S. Agnese (1584): Acquisti e doni 44, cap. IV, ff 10v-11r.
Disciplinati: Gesù Pellegrino (1422), cap. VI, f 81r, cap. XV, f 82v; S. Niccolò (c. 1400), cap. XVI, ff 5v-6r, cap. XVII, f 6r; S. Francesco (1400), cap. IV, ff 3r-v; Gesù in S. Croce (1332?), cap. VII, ff 11v-12r; S. Giovanni Scalzo (1456), cap. V, f 4v, cap. X, f 6v; S. Domenico (1470), cap. III, 722; S. Lorenzo in Piano (1363), f 24r; SS. Innocenti (1480), ff 9v, 24r; S. Antonio da Padova (1466), ff 11r, 12r; S. Maria della Neve (1447), f 21r; S. Maria in S. Maria Sopr'Arno (L. Cl5th), ff 3v-4r, 7r-v; S. Antonio Abbate (1486), cap. X, ff 43r-45v; S. Paolo (1472), ff 15r-16v; S. Jacopo in S. Jacopo Sopr'Arno, cap. XX-XXI, f 43v; S. Jeronimo (1410), ff 4r-5r, 16v, 17v.
59. S. Zanobi (1427), cap. XVII, f 46r; S. Domenico (1470), cap. VI.8, 730; S. Maria in S. Maria Sopr'Arno (L. Cl5th), f 3v; Gesù Pellegrino (1422), cap. XV, f 82v.
60. S. Francesco (1400), cap. IV, f 3r.
61. S. Maria della Neve (1447), f 21r; SS. Innocenti (1480), f 24r; Laudesi di S. Croce (1485), cap. XIX, f 31r.
62. SS. Innocenti (1480), f 9v: "Et quando al detto medico paresse che tale infermo aveva la limosina per sua malatia di febre od altra malattia incurabile...".
63. Ibid. and S. Giovanni Scalzo (1456), cap. X, f 6v.
64. SS. Innocenti (1480), f 10r: "Et non possino detti vicitatori portare la limosina ad alcuno infermo la seconda volta se non è confessato".
65. Ibid., f 9v; S. Giovanni Scalzo (1456), cap. X, f 6v; S. Lorenzo in Piano in S. Maria Novella (1363), f 24r; S. Zanobi (1427), cap. XVII, ff 46r-v.
66. In the Trecento, contributions were 10s a week (S. Zanobi (1324) cap. XIII, f 6v), which was equivalent to just over two days' work for an unskilled labourer: De La Roncière, "La condition des salariés", 17. In 1460 30s was equivalent to three days' work: Goldthwaite, The Building, 437.
67. On bequests, see Chapter 4.

68. CRS 2170.C ff 17r-18r: 1441 (?). Cf also Catasto 989, f 469r for 1478.
69. Cf Chapter 2, Tables 3 and 2(b).
70. For example CRS I. 115, f 36v: "E poveri del Ghonfalone del Dragho di quartiere di S. Spirito di Firenze deano dare a dì 25 di dicembre 1466 Lire 31.4s.Od. E per loro dati a Mafio mugnaio alla mulina d'Ognisanti per istaia 24 di farina... della quale facemo fare pane cotto a numero pani 2046, distribuirsi a predetti poveri del Ghonfalone a pani' due per bocca". For subsequent distributions see Ibid., ff 36v, 67v, 104v.
71. This procedure was outlined in S. Agnese (1584) ff 48r-v, although it was an extension of the system in operation since the late thirteenth century (S. Agnese (1280-1298), cap. LVIII, 68).
72. For example CRS I.115, f 104v: "Lorenzo di Piero di Chosimo de'Medici nostro benefattore de' avere a dì 24 di dicembre 1491 staiora 24 di grano, del quale se de far pane a dare a poveri del nostro Ghonfalone per Dio".
73. S. Agnese (1584), ff 37r-38r.
74. Ibid., f 38r. The dowries were paid under the terms of the testament of Monna Lena degli Ottinelli.
75. Ibid., ff 41v-43v.
76. Records of the entry of these women appear in the company's Libro de' Partiti of 1484 to 1509: CRS I.4. For example, see Ibid., f 6v: "E prefati capitani oggi, questo dì 19 di giugno 1485... ottenono per loro solenne partito per tucte fare rese che Monna Antonia, vedova donna fu di Buonamico purgatore, d'età d'anni 60 o circa, s'intenda essere e sia delle donne nostre e in sulla Piazza del Carmino e goda e privilegi che hanno e godono l'altre donne che al presente sono in dicto spedale". See also Ibid., ff 7v, 14v, 30r, 32r and the creation of an Abbess from among the women in Ibid., f 35r. An inventory of the house is in CRS I.114, f 82r:14.viii.1453.
77. Passerini, Storia, 120.
78. For the foundation see Provv. Reg. 26, f 8(bis.) r-v:19.vii.1332. An inventory of their "masserizie e beni" is in CRS 6.78, ff 5r-v.
79. S. Frediano (1488), cap. I, ff 1r-2r: "Delle intentione che mosse gli huomini a compilare e presenti capitoli". Cf S. Frediano (1324), cap. V, f 2r.
80. CRS 5.4, f 6r: 29.ix.1438 and Acquisti e doni 4, ff 5r, 6r and 9r.
81. See Chapter 2, Tables 4 and 3.
82. See Chapter 4 on bequests to the flagellant companies.

83. See above n. 58.
84. The four main ones were the companies of S. Antonio Abbate, S. Jeronimo, S. Jacopo, and S. Paolo.
85. S. Antonio da Padova (1466), f 12r.
86. S. Antonio Abbate (1486), cap. X, ff 43r-45v; S. Jeronimo (1410), cap. III, ff 4r-v; S. Jacopo, cap. XX; S. Paolo (1472), ff 16r-v.
87. Ibid.
88. The compagnia di S. Jeronimo spent Lire 111 in 1473 and Lire 109 in 1483: ACJ, Entrata e Uscita F, ff 97v-101r, 106r-110v.
89. Total charity in 1483 to 5 poveri: ACJ, Entrata e Uscita F, ff 106r-110v.
90. In 1483 unskilled labourers were paid 9.6 soldi per day: Goldthwaite, The Building, 436. In the fifteenth century one man spent about Lire 36 per annum on food: Goldthwaite, The Building, 347.
91. Records of the charity given by the compagnia di S. Paolo between 1478 and 1480 are in CRS 1592. 37. The number of children are listed in Ibid., ff 159v-174v.
92. S. Paolo (1472), f 16r.
93. "Qualche povera persona et honestà, vedova or pupilli o altri": S. Antonio Abbate (1486), cap. X, f 44r.
94. See note 91 above.
95. Most recently see R.C. Trexler, "Charity and the defense of urban élites in the Italian Communes", The Rich, the Well Born and the Powerful: Élités and Upper Classes in History, ed. F.C. Jaher, (Urbana, 1973), 64-109; A. Spicciati, "The 'poveri vergognosi' in fifteenth-century Florence. The first thirty years' activity of the Buonomini di S. Martino", Aspects of Poverty in Early Modern Europe, ed. T. Riis, (Stuttgart, 1981), 119-182.
96. Trexler, "Charity and the defense of the urban élites", 99.
97. Ibid., 70-75.
98. Archivio dei Buonomini di S. Martino, Fondo pergamene I, "Codice dei capitoli", ff 1r-v. Quoted in Spicciati, "The 'poveri vergognosi'", 161 n.9.
99. Indeed 43 percent of the 221 families aided between 1466 and 1470 owned their own workshops: Spicciati, 125-26, 150. See also B. Pullan, "Poveri, mendicanti e vagabondi (secoli XIV-XVII)", Storia d'Italia. Annali I. Dal Feudalismo al capitalismo (Turin, 1978), 995, 1038-1043.

100. H. Hoshino, L'Arte della Lana di Firenze, 233.
101. Ibid., 238-240.
102. R. de Roover, "labour conditions in Florence around 1400: theory, policy and reality", Florentine Studies, 304.
103. Spicchiani, "The 'poveri vergognosi'", 145.
104. Ibid., 156.
105. Ibid., 152-153.
106. Ibid., 131-132. The Buonomini began by giving to Convertite sums varying between Lire 20-25: BNF Fondo Tordini 18, f 50r: l.iv.1442.
107. See Chapter 6, section 5(iv).
108. Spicchiani, "The 'poveri vergognosi'", Table 5, 149.
109. Spicchiani, "The 'poveri vergognosi'", 137.
110. Ibid., 142: 94 families were aided a total of 6,223 times.
111. See Chapter 6, Table 8 and subsequent section.
112. Spicchiani, "The 'poveri vergognosi'", 137. Each loaf weighed 200 grams.
113. Calculated by G. Pinto, "Il Personale, le balie e i salariati dell'Ospedale di San Gallo di Firenze negli anni 1395-1406. Note per la storia del salariato nella città medievale", Ricerche storiche II, N.S., (1974), 158. Although this refers to 1395-1405, the same remains true of the mid-fifteenth century: Goldthwaite, The Building, 345-346.
114. Or S. Michele gave children a third of the sum received by an adult: OSM 248, f 17v: 27.x.1324.
115. Following Pinto, "Il personale, le balie e i salariati", 158, a weekly consumption of bread for two adults and 2.7 children was 13,195 grs. The Buonomini provided 1880 grs. or 14.25 percent of the total.
116. See Goldthwaite, The Building, 436-438.
117. Calculated from Pinto, "Il Personale, le balie e i salariati", 158.
118. Discussed in general terms by Trexler, Public Life, 408, 411-414; Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 63-66, and 201-205 on the sixteenth-century artisan companies; Davidsohn, Storia, VI, 212-219.

119. Statuto del Podestà dell'anno 1325. Statuti della Repubblica Fiorentina, ed. R. Caggese, (Florence, 1921), II, rub. LVII, 398-99; R. de Roover, "Labour conditions in Florence around 1400", 292-293; N. Rodolico, I Ciompi. Una pagina di storia del proletariato operaio, (Florence, 1971 ed.), 25-26, 45-46; V. Rutenburg, Popolo e movimenti popolari nell'Italia del '300 e '400 (Bologna, 1971 ed.), 60-61.
120. Statuto del Podestà (1325), 399.
121. Rodolico, I Ciompi, 45-46.
122. One is the compagnia di S. Marco, which from 1317 could contain only lanaiuoli and not sottoposti of the Lana, because "sub pretextu sotietatis, predicti battitores et scardassarii et pettinatores faciant ibidem conventiculas contra Artem Lane": Statuto dell'Arte della Lana di Firenze (1317-1319), ed. A.M.E. Agnoletti (Florence 1940-48), 203. The other compagnia di S. Marco, was for the Lucchese: Davidsohn, Storia, VI, 158.
123. P. Fanfani, Capitoli della Compagnia dei Portatori o S. Giovanni Decollato (Bologna, 1858), 6-7. Other trade companies to found hospices were: the compagnia de' tessitori, torcitori e filatolai di seta, hospice built by 1481: Trexler, Public Life, 411 v.206; the compagnia dei tavolaccini in S. Clemente: Richa, Notizie storiche V, 242, and Decima 67, f 80v; compagnia di S. Eligio e S. Lorenzo detta dei maniscalchi met "in sul canto della via delle Ruote" and built a hospice in 1435: Del Migliore, "Registro", f 57r, Decima 67, f 90v, and Passerini, Storia, 106; compagnia di S. Paolo dei sarti: Del Migliore, "Registro", ff 31r-v; S. Maria Assunta (and later "dei battilani") founded hospice in 1489: Del Migliore, "Registro", f 60r, Passerini, Storia, 108-110. The compagnia di S. Andrea dei purgatori e cardatori of S. Candida had a hospice by 1466 when the statutes were revised: Cap. CRS 854, f 6r.
124. The 1349 statutes are in ASF, Accademia del disegno I, and are printed by G. Gaye, Carteggio inedito d'artisti dei secoli XIV, XV, XVI (Florence, 1960), 32-42. For more information see M.A. Jack Ward, "The Accademia dei Disegno in Sixteenth-Century Florence. A study of an artists' institution", Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1972 .
125. Capitoli CRS 190. See also I. del Badia, La compagnia dei tessitori dei drappi e la sua loggia (Florence, 1904).
126. Cap. CRS 854, f 1r. "Protettore e defensori del nostro spedale sieno i nostri Consoli dell'Arte della Lana": Ibid., f 22r.
127. Compagnia di S. Jacopo de'cinatori founded by 1454: Weissman, 65. The compagnia di S. Maria Assunta was founded in 1320 (Del Migliore, "Registro", f 60r) at the Canto a Monteloro. However, there is

no indication that the company was connected with the battilani before 1488, when the statutes were approved by the Government: Trexler, Public Life, 411 n.204.

128. S. Sebastiano: 1474 statutes in Bibl. Ricc. MS 1685.
129. Scuola di S. Maria di Venezia: statutes of 1382-83: Cap. CRS 891.
130. S. Cohn, The Laboring Classes, 103.
131. S. Caterina, detta del chiodo: Del Migliore, Firenze, città nobilissima illustrata, 303; S. Cornelio: Ibid., 302-303; S. Barbara: CRS 203. 2A under 21.2.1447.
132. M. Battistini, La confrérie de Sainte-Barbe des Flamands à Florence. Documents relatifs aux tisserands et aux tapissiers (Brussels, 1931), 65.
133. Ibid., 67.
134. Trexler, Public Life, 414.
135. For example, S. Andrea dei purgatori e cardatori: Cap. CRS 854, ff 13v, 25v, 31r, 39r.
136. R.C. Trexler, "Charity and the Defense of Urban Elites in the Italian Communes", 97-100, and B.S. Pullan, "Poveri, mendicanti e vagabondi (secoli XIV-XVII)", Storia d'Italia. Annali I. Dal Feudalismo al capitalismo (Turin, 1978), 995, 1038-1043.

CHAPTER 9

Confraternity Administration and Elections

1. Introduction

The statutes of a religious confraternity were a blend of communal and monastic models. Constitutions were normally drawn up shortly after the foundation of a company by a committee of members in consultation with a representative of the secular or regular clergy¹⁾. The influence of the laity is obvious in the structure of a company for it was based on the guilds to which so many members belonged²⁾. The chapters dealing with the para-liturgical ceremonies, on the other hand, usually reveal the intervention of a priest with a detailed knowledge of official Church services³⁾. The combination of these influences produced a religious society which enabled the layman to deepen his personal piety within an organisation which was familiar from his everyday life.

In what follows it will become obvious how closely dependent were confraternity statutes on those of the guilds and therefore by implication the Florentine government itself. Like the Arti, religious companies were autonomous and self-governing⁴⁾. They were directed by a college of captains, who were advised and checked by a council. Other officials, who were common to most corporations, included treasurers, notaries, syndics and a series of employees, such as messengers and watchmen. One important official, however, who differentiated the confraternity from other corporations was the priest or frate correttore, whose main concern was for the spiritual rather than the material welfare of the membership.

Given this similarity between most communal institutions in Florence, our main aim in this chapter will be to examine how power was shared rather than to describe each office in detail. After a brief survey of the structure of the leading confraternities in Florence, we will look at the main functions of the captains and then see how other officials and electoral procedures modified their role.

2 The structure of Florentine confraternities

Imprimamente conciosiacosaché neuna congregatione puote perseverare in buono stato senza capo e guida e acciò che Dio mantegna la nostra Compagnia e molti prieghi di buone persone e di virtude, ordiniamo che lla detta Compagnia abbia sempre IV capitani e II camarlinghi e VI consiglieri. ...et nelle braccia de' detti ufficiali permanga tucto lo stato e reggimento e conducimento della detta Compagnia⁵⁾.

The belief that confraternities needed elected officials in order to function efficiently and virtuously was the implicit assumption behind all their statutes. The basic organisation was fairly similar with only slight variations according to type of activity

and period. The table on the following page summarises the number of officials possessed by some of the main companies meeting in Florence between 1240 and 1500.

The differences in the size of the organisations was quite considerable. While a company such as Or S. Michele employed up to forty men, the small flagellant society of S. Niccolò in S. Maria del Carmine had only six. The majority of confraternities, however, fell between these extremes, although the laudesi did tend to have marginally more officials than the flagellants. There was a tendency for the former to expand with the growth of their ceremonial activities as they employed more professional singers and musicians to enliven their festivals⁶⁾. Growing commemorative obligations also involved extra personnel such as syndics to deal with individuals and corporations concerning inheritance⁷⁾.

The general increase of the administrative activities can be seen in the case of the compagnia di S. Zanobi which increased the number of its officers by near fifty percent during the 100 years between 1324 and 1427 and also in the case of the compagnia di S. Frediano which expanded its personnel by 25 percent in the same period.

TABLE 9.1 Number of officials belonging to Florentine confraternities, 1240-1500

Name of Company	Date of source	Officials												Proveditore	Others	Total	
		Captain	Councillor	Treasurer	Teachers of novices	Corrector/ chaplain	Singers	Messenger/ servant	Syndic	Sick members	Notary/ scribe	Secretan					
1) <u>Laudest</u>																	
S. Gillo	1284	2	6	2	1	1	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	12			
S. Agnese	1280-1298	2	6	2	1+	1	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	18+	1 (banditore) ¹		
S. Zambol	1324	6	3	3	1	1	2	1	-	4	-	-	-	17			
S. Zambol	1427	6	6	4	-	1	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	26			
S. Frediano	1324	4	6	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14			
S. Frediano	1438	4	6	3	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	18			
S. Pler Martire	1312	4	-	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11			
S. Pler Martire	1447	4	-	1	-	1	4	-	-	-	1	-	-	13			
SS. Annunziata	1451	5	5	2	-	1	3	1	1	4	1	1	1	28			
S. Croce	1485	4	4	3	2	1	-	-	-	2	-	2	1	22	1 (doctor)		
2) <u>Flagellant</u>																	
Gesù	1332?	3	6	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	8 (capodieci) ³		
Gesù Pellegrino	1354	4	4	4	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	18	8+ (capodieci) ³		
Gesù Pellegrino	1422	4	4	4	-	1	-	-	-	4	1	-	-	27+	1 (vicario) ⁴		
S. Giovanni fra le ancore	1363	1	4	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	14	4 (pacalil) ³		
S. Giovanni fra le ancore	1476	1	2	2	-	1	-	-	-	5	1	2	-	13			
S. Lorenzo	1365	1	2	1	4	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	17			
S. Francesco	1400	3	4	2	3	1	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	19			
S. Niccolò	C.1400	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	4	1	-	-	6	1 (lmosintere) ⁴		
S. Jeronimo	1410	4	4	2	1	8	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	28			
S. Maria della Neve	1447	3	4	1	2	1	-	-	-	2-4	1	2	1	17	4 (lmosintert) ⁴		
S. Giovanni scalzo	1456	1	2	1	2	1-4	-	-	-	3	-	2	1	16+			
S. Antonio da Padova	1466	3	-	1	-	5	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	12	1-2 (pacalil) ³		
S. Domenico	1470	3	-	2	3	1	-	2	-	4	1	4	1	20+	4 (lmosintert) ⁴		
S. Paolo	1472	1	2	-	2	4	-	1	-	4	1	-	-	22			
SS. Innocenti	1480	6	4	1	2	1	1	-	-	3	-	2	-	20	3 (lmosintert) ⁴		
S. Antonio Abbate	1485	1	2	1	3	4	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	17			
S. Gerolamo, Costa														13			
S. Giorgio	1491	3	-	1	2	4	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	10			
Assumpti one	L. cl5th	1	2	-	-	3	-	-	-	2	1	2	-	10			
S. Maria	L. cl5th	1	2	1	2	1	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	12			
3) <u>Boys'</u>																	
S. Giovanni														10			
Evangelista	1427	1	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	1	2	-	12+			
Purificazione	1444	1	4	-	2	1+	-	-	-	2	-	2	-				
4) <u>Charitable</u>																	
Or S. Michele	1294	6	12	3	4	-	-	2	1	-	1	3	-	36	4 (ammantori) ²		
Bigallo	1417	4	-	1	-	-	-	2	2	-	1	-	-	11			
S. Maria della Croce al Templo	1488	1	2	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8			
Misericordia	1490	4	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	36	20 (lmosintert) ⁴		

+ = 1 or more variable

1. Announce company festivals.

2. The same as proveditore?

3. Oversaw the members' behaviour.

4. Distributed alms to the poor.

(Source: Statutes as listed in bibliography)

Flagellant companies, on the other hand, discouraged lavish display in the interests of penitence and to retain the simplicity of their ceremonies⁸⁾. Although this meant that neither professional singers nor syndics were needed, the disciplinati nonetheless emphasized the role of other officials, such as the frate correttore and provveditori, who were employed to ensure that their colleagues carried out their job more efficiently and to impose a more rigorous moral and spiritual code on their members.

The effect of this multiplication of bureaucracy on both types of confraternity was that the captains delegated an increasing number of tasks to more specialised officials. In this way the captains tended to lose direct control of some areas of the confraternities' activities, and were themselves subjected to closer surveillance.

3 The officials

Although the number and even titles of captains varied considerably from one confraternity to another⁹⁾, there was little difference in the basic area of their authority¹⁰⁾. The office was likened to the role of Christ¹¹⁾:

L'uficio de' capitani dee essere capo e guida d'ogni benfare e d'ogni buono exemplo dare secondo che disse il nostro Signore chi vuole essere maggiore che gli altri debbia essere ministro e servo degli altri.

The captains had to be the leader of the confraternity and set a good example in their behaviour. Furthermore they were to

care for the souls of the members and make sure that they obeyed the dictates of the company's statutes¹²⁾.

The moral responsibility of the office required that the incumbents had to be wise, constant and patient¹³⁾. On the basis of this assumption obedience was regarded as an essential ingredient of membership. Those who did not obey were punished firmly, as has been seen in the case of the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino¹⁴⁾. However, respect was due to the captains not just because of their moral superiority, but also because as office-holders they had been given a responsible position to interpret and enforce the statutes.

The prestige of the captains, like the consuls of the guilds¹⁵⁾, was considerable in any confraternity. Their authority was invoked in virtually every chapter of a company's statutes, since they were responsible for seeing that the organisation functioned according to the prescriptions of the founders and that the services which were the basis of a confraternity's life ran properly at the correct time and place¹⁶⁾. In order to ensure the efficient functioning of the company, council meetings were convened regularly, sometimes as often as twice a week¹⁷⁾, to authorise payment of salaries and outstanding debts and discuss any matter which was not covered by the statutes. The captains' role and prestige was further enhanced by the fact that they were the only officials, apart from the frate correttore, who could suggest changes to the statutes¹⁸⁾, although ultimately any innovation had to be ratified by the councillors and then submitted to the assembled membership for their approval¹⁹⁾.

The captains were also responsible for the physical and spiritual welfare of members. Thus if somebody fell ill they visited him in order to offer spiritual and physical succour²⁰⁾, although as companies expanded special visitors of the sick were appointed to take over this function²¹⁾. If subsequently the member died

the captains could authorise payment for his funeral, if he was poor, and organise a vigil for his soul and commemorative services to be performed in perpetuity²²⁾. The captains also had some responsibility for the members' spiritual health because in many companies it was their duty to cajole them to attend meetings, take communion and make confession, and then see that they were punished if they failed in these obligations²³⁾.

Until this point we have referred to the captains in the plural. However, nearly half of the flagellant companies were directed by only one official who was normally called a Prior²⁴⁾. The reason for the choice of a single man rather than a collegiate form of government was not made clear by the statutes, but may have been a demonstration of the preference of the disciplinati for a closer imitation of the monastic model²⁵⁾.

The authority of an individual Prior in a flagellant company was inevitably greater than that of the captains who served in groups. The Prior, though he might be checked by his councillors, did not have to share decisions with his colleagues. Furthermore in a company as small as the compagnia di S. Niccolò in S. Maria del Carmine the Prior exercised several important powers by himself. He decided whether the number of members should be increased, chose the new treasurers, punished members who had failed to confess each month and expelled miscreants²⁶⁾.

However, despite their great formal power and responsibility, the captains of any company were as likely to err as their charges, and confraternity practices took their frailty into account as a matter of course. Captains' transgressions were normally discovered by their successors who always conducted an investigation into the behaviour of their predecessors and punished them when they, either through negligence or intention, had fallen short of their duties²⁷⁾. The records of the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino which provided information about the shortcomings of members²⁸⁾ also give details of the captains' faults. Captains were punished

with surprising frequency in, for example, the period between 1365 and 1384; forty out of the sixty groups of captains were corrected for breaking the rules during these twenty years²⁹⁾.

The majority of faults which were committed by officials were minor and were described in the records as merely negligence without further details. As we have seen in the case of members, the use of this term meant usually that he had failed to attend services³⁰⁾. While captains probably did go to most meetings³¹⁾, their occasional absence would have set a bad example for those who were supposed to obey their orders. But the records of the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino also indicate other actions which were considered as negligent. One entry of 25 March 1368 enumerates a series of misdemeanors³²⁾:

Una matina di nostra tornata niuno di loro furono alla chonpangnia, e perch'eglono non choresono cierti fratelli che chomisono cierti difetti e furono loro manifesti, perch'eglino non solleccitorono i nostri fratelli della venuta della chonpangnia e della confessione, perch'eglono non feciono mai nel loro uficio legiere gli apunti, e perch'eglino non choresono i fratelli ch' anderono a vedere la giostra e per molti altri difetti.

The captains had neglected to fulfill even their most basic duty, which was to make sure that members attended meetings and confessed, and then had failed to correct them afterwards. The officials may even have been absent because they preferred to attend the tournament rather than the service.

The captains were all punished by being made to stand in the middle of the oratory dressed in a black habit for the duration of three meetings, at the end of which the members filed past and gave each one a blow with his whip³³⁾.

It will also be remembered that ordinary members of the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino were expelled for so-called "scandalous" behaviour, which involved acting or speaking against the wishes

of the company³⁴⁾. Niccolò di Cecco, for example, had dismissed the frate correttore and made payments from the company's funds without consulting his colleagues³⁵⁾. Another man violated established practices when he refused to join the company's procession on Good Friday 1366³⁶⁾. All these actions either through intention or omission were opposed to the basic principles which governed the office of a captain. The captains were after all supposed to set a good example, to share responsibilities and decisions, and correct the brothers who had failed to live up to the company's mores.

The imposition of so many punishments suggests that not only were officials more lax than was desirable, but also that they were made accountable for their actions. The correction of captains by their successors was, however, only the end product of a system of checks and balances which ensured that power should not be abused. One of the main responsibilities of some of the other leading officials, and especially the councillors, provveditori and correttori, was to limit the captains' sphere of activities.

In virtually all confraternities the captains were assisted by a board of councillors, the number of whom varied, as they did in the guilds, according to the size of the membership³⁷⁾. As early as three years after the foundation of Or S. Michele, for example, the company's first statutes envisaged the necessity for twelve councillors, while the smaller flagellant compagnia di S. Lorenzo in Piano, which had been established eleven years previously, only required two³⁸⁾.

The basic function of councillors in any company was to give advice and to act as a check on the captains³⁹⁾. In common with both the Commune and guilds⁴⁰⁾, the council of a confraternity did not have the power to act by itself without the presence and consent of the captains. The only exception to this rule

was if the latter had attempted to change the statutes without seeking the consent of the membership; in these circumstances the councillors could call their own meeting to discuss how best to remove the captains from office⁴¹⁾.

Even if a council did not have the power to initiate, it could block any moves by the captains, because the latter needed a majority vote of the councillors in order to introduce modifications to existing customs and spend large sums of money⁴²⁾. Furthermore when changes were made to the statutes, recourse had to be made to a wider committee and sometimes a general assembly of the membership⁴³⁾.

The book of ordinances belonging to the compagnia di S. Agnese for the years 1280 to 1298 permits us to examine the variety of financial and constitutional issues which were referred to select councils or a meeting of the whole membership. The majority of the sixty-eight meetings recorded here involved the presence of not just the captains and councillors, but also up to six buoni uomini who were co-opted to offer advice and ratify the decisions of the governing committee. The subjects included the painting of a fresco, appointing a messenger, establishing an annual mass for the dead of the company and also the number of candles to be burned at the ceremonies⁴⁴⁾. Each involved the confraternity in spending sums over and above the normal running expenses. However, when changes were made to the statutes, they normally had to be ratified by a majority vote of the assembled membership⁴⁵⁾. For example, at the last meeting recorded in this book over forty men were assembled in the friars' refectory to elect four arbitrators and make additions to the company's constitutions, presumably in order to incorporate all the ordinances which had been passed during the previous eighteen years⁴⁶⁾.

While the basic function of councillors did not change in the Trecento, their status did increase gradually. The main reason was that during the course of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries most confraternities adopted the secret

scrutiny, a new electoral system which had been introduced for communal offices in 1328⁴⁷⁾. One of the effects of this innovation was that councillors were usually involved more closely in electing other officials⁴⁸⁾. The captains, therefore, had to pay more attention to the views of their colleagues.

The emphasis towards making the captains more accountable can also be detected in the introduction of the provveditore. His position had not been envisaged in the earliest confraternity statutes; he became a regular feature of the laudesi and disciplinati societies only from the second half of the Trecento⁴⁹⁾. His office was important because he was "ad avere gli occhi in ogni cosa della nostra compagnia, in ogni atto e tucti uficiali"⁵⁰⁾. Indeed the captains themselves were included among his charges and had to be warned and punished if they erred⁵¹⁾. Ultimately his authority derived from the statutes, for his job was to make sure that their provisions were fulfilled⁵²⁾.

In many confraternities the provveditore doubled as a company secretary, for he took notes of the decisions which were made by the governing council and counted the votes which were cast for each issue⁵³⁾. He was also appointed as auditor at the end of each treasurers' term of office, making sure that they had not overspent their budget or paid out large sums which had not been authorised by the captains⁵⁴⁾. One further indication of the provveditore's status is that he and his scribe had the only two keys to the tabernacle where the name tickets of officials were kept between each sortition⁵⁵⁾. Clearly a corrupt or irresponsible provveditore could have easily juggled the names in such a way as to ensure that his favourites were elected.

An even more important check on the captains' authority was the correttore or priest who acted as spiritual

leader and advisor⁵⁶⁾. He was the representative of the Church's moral and spiritual values, and as such could be considered as "sopra la compagnia"⁵⁷⁾. He was the heir of the religious who in conjunction with the founders of the company had drawn up the original statutes. One of the main responsibilities of the corrector was therefore to act as guardian of the statutes. The captains could not introduce any changes without his consent and would be punished by him if they attempted to break the basic rules which governed the confraternity⁵⁸⁾.

Indeed the corrector played a vital role in the enforcement of obedience. He was to act as the official "che ammonischa et correggha tutti, così piccioli di questa compagnia come i grandi"⁵⁹⁾. Confession of transgressions was done both privately and publicly and was followed by punishments which were imposed by the corrector. This process was designed to humiliate and thus discourage the miscreant from repeating his misdemeanors⁶⁰⁾.

The function of correctors varied from confraternity to confraternity much more than did the role of other officials. While the basic sacramental role remained the same, the area of responsibility varied according to the type of church in which a company met. In particular correctors who were drawn from Mendicant Orders exercised a much greater control over how a company was run than did the priests who were employed by groups which met elsewhere. This is at least partly explained by the friars' emphasis on the administration of penance and the hearing of confessions, compared with the parish priest who often had no formal training in theology and the cure of souls⁶¹⁾. Indeed the influence of the friars over some companies increased in the fifteenth century. The laudesi societies in S. Maria Novella and SS. Annunziata, for example, included friars among their board of captains. By 1447 the Dominican company moreover had become virtually an administrative organ of S. Maria Novella and lost its vitality as a centre of lay devotion⁶²⁾.

In confraternities which were not subject to the influence of a resident Order the members were often more free to select those who officiated at their services and correct the failings of their members. In the late thirteenth century, for example, the captains of Or S. Michele asked a different preacher to deliver sermons every Sunday and arranged for masses to be said each week in a series of churches throughout Florence⁶³⁾.

The compagnia di S. Zanobi in 1324 also seems to have been independent of the control of a particular religious. Mass was celebrated by whichever chaplain of S. Reparata they obtained from the Canons⁶⁴⁾.

However, by the fifteenth century the priests of most Florentine companies had assumed a slightly more important role. In part this was because of their closer involvement in elections after the introduction of the secret scrutiny, and in part because of the Archbishop's desire to make confraternities more accountable to the Church⁶⁵⁾. Thus in 1415 Or S. Michele was officially elevated to the status of a collegiate church, with a permanent staff of ten priests and two clerics⁶⁶⁾, while the compagnia di S. Zanobi had acquired a specific chaplain whom the statutes envisaged as adopting a role towards the captains and councillors similar to that of Christ in relation to the apostles⁶⁷⁾.

Interesting also is the example of the new fifteenth century compagnie della notte, for although the majority met in independent oratories, the correctors played an important role in enforcing an especially rigorous discipline. For this reason the confraternities preferred to choose friars from among the Observants whose ideal of returning to a primitive Rule was paralleled by these societies own emphasis on penitence⁶⁸⁾.

While councillors, provveditori, and correctors all checked the captains' authority, other officials took direct responsibilities away from them. This development can be seen in the appointment of the visitatori degli infermi, who assumed the task of

visiting sick members⁶⁹⁾.

Some of these new officials were, however, intended to limit the captains' area of personal control as in the development of the office of the syndic. His duty was to represent a company in any legal disputes with outsiders, especially those concerning bequests⁷⁰⁾. As the larger laudesi and charitable companies inherited more property this office changed from an ad hoc to a permanent one. From acting as legal representative simply on the occasions when the company's rights were challenged, the syndic took charge of all matters relating to a company's capital assets. The syndic of the compagnia di S. Pier Martire, for example, was employed to collect debts, interview prospective tenants and deal with the officials of the Monte Comune⁷¹⁾.

The structure and evolution of all these confraternities mirrored other communal corporations, and in particular the Arti⁷²⁾. The executive of both religious companies and guilds was made up of captains or consuls. They were advised and checked by councillors and treasurers whose consent had to be obtained in order to spend any large sums of money or introduce any fundamental change into the statutes. Furthermore the organisation of confraternity and guild developed in similar directions. Not only did their bureaucracies expand with the creation of more specialised officials, such as syndics, but also there was a move towards making the leading officials more accountable. Provveditori were created in order to ensure the efficient running of both types of corporation⁷³⁾, and in the case of the confraternity the frate correttore often assumed a more prominent position as the guardian of the company's morals. However, the office of the friar or priest as a spiritual director did distinguish the confraternity from the guild. Ultimately the aim of the former was to promote the spiritual life of members and the aim of the guild was to protect their professional interests. While not forgetting that the Arti did provide some religious services⁷⁴⁾, it is significant that the

only occasion that a priest assumed any position of real influence was in the sortition of votes for the election of consuls⁷⁵⁾. Indeed priests played the same role in confraternity elections, as we shall see in the section which follows.

4 Confraternity elections

Confraternity election procedures were based fairly closely on the communal and guild models⁷⁶⁾. They also became more complex in order to prevent the domination of the same people, especially after the introduction of the secret scrutiny. Moreover confraternities shared two other characteristics of all communal corporations- short terms of office and the divieto. In the earliest company statutes the normal term of office was six months, but by the late fourteenth century this was reduced to four in order to introduce more control over the officials and to allow more members to participate in the government of the confraternity⁷⁷⁾. The divieto, on the other hand, operated for between one and three years and was intended to prevent domination of the same men or their male relatives by preventing them from holding office either together or consecutively⁷⁸⁾.

The earliest surviving account of an election in a Florentine confraternity is from the 1284 statutes of the compagnia di S. Gilio⁷⁹⁾. The procedure which was based on a simple system of voting by lot formed the basis of most other company elections⁸⁰⁾, before the gradual adoption of the secret scrutiny in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.

The compagnia di S. Gilio held elections twice a year, in January and August, when the captains were appointed for a period of six months. A few days before the end of their office the captains chose eighteen to twenty-four members who were to act as the electoral college. These arroti then each nominated two members who they considered to be "li più savi e migliori". The friar,

probably standing at the company altar, received and counted the votes and then announced the two men who had received the largest number of votes⁸¹⁾.

This process was theoretically a relatively impartial system of selection which guaranteed that the best and most qualified men were appointed. But at the same time because the captains appointed the electoral college they could influence to some degree who succeeded them. The captains' control over the election process was strengthened still further when the company revised its statutes at the end of the following century. The number of arroti was now reduced to twelve and the captains themselves were included among the nominators⁸²⁾. However, two changes were introduced, suggesting that the compilers of the statutes were aware of the danger of the captains' being in an even stronger position to dominate the company. First the friar, who in the earlier system had merely counted the votes, was now included in the electoral college, and secondly the councillors were given the power to remove any captains who attempted to alter the statutes without reference to the membership⁸³⁾.

The evolution of the electoral system of the compagnia di S. Gilio only partly confirms the more general trend we have observed among most confraternities towards the reduction of power at the top. The strengthening of the role of the friar and the councillors does suggest a desire to control the captains, although the inclusion of the latter in the electoral college also points to how the same group of members could dominate the government of the company.

It was perhaps partly to introduce greater impartiality in the selection of officials that most confraternities adopted gradually the secret scrutiny. The inspiration for this innovation dates from a law of 1328 by which the Florentine Government reformed the method of electing the leading officials of the Republic⁸⁴⁾. The intention was to introduce a more fair system which would rid the city of the factions which had

characterised recent politics⁸⁵⁾. While it may have been possible to extend this argument to the guilds with their relatively large membership and quasi-political status, it becomes less convincing when applied to confraternities. Therefore although the Government forced the guilds to adopt the scrutiny⁸⁶⁾, no equivalent pressure was exerted on confraternities. Notable exceptions were Or S. Michele and the Misericordia, which, as we shall see, were ordered to adopt the scrutiny so that the Priors could attempt to limit corruption of any officials who might be anxious to benefit from the companies' affluence after the Black Death.

The new method of electing officials is outlined in the 1354 statutes of the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino, one of the first devotional companies to adopt the scrutiny⁸⁷⁾. The first stage was that the Christian and surname of each full member was copied from the membership list onto a ticket. Then the outgoing captains chose twelve buoni uomini from the company, who together with the counsellors, treasurers, and provveditori formed the electoral college. These twenty-eight men then assembled in the company's chapel and cast a vote using a black or white bean for or against each nominee. The names of those men who had received a two-third majority were then placed in a bag which was locked in a chest and kept in the chapel. Then on the first Sundays of February, June and October, the frate in front of the whole company withdrew from the bag the first names which came to hand; these men were declared the new captains. If by any chance one of them was either ineligible or was absent from Florence, another name was withdrawn in his place.

This method of election was intended to introduce greater objectivity in the process for the selection of officials. The immediate influence of the retiring captains was reduced not only by increasing the size of the electoral college, but also by ensuring that the nomination itself was secret. Furthermore because the scrutiny was only held every few years, factions

within the company would have found it more difficult to ensure the continued succession of their friends.

However, despite these new checks, the outgoing officials in this particular company did continue to influence the scrutiny, because they chose the twelve arroti and were included within the electoral college. As a result the same names reoccur frequently among the leading offices⁸⁸⁾. In an effort to widen the pool of candidates the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino revised its statutes in 1422 as follows: the captains first called a general meeting of the company to approve their decision to proceed to a scrutiny. Then the membership elected forty men who together with the captains, councillors and provveditori formed the electoral college. Each of these fifty-two men considered the merits of the total membership; those names which received a two-thirds vote were then placed in the bags for the three main offices.

Large rather than small electoral colleges became more typical of confraternities in the fifteenth century, especially as they began to introduce the scrutiny. The speed with which companies changed their method of electing officials depended largely on the size and wealth of the individual society. In the case of Or S. Michele the Commune moved very quickly after the Black Death to control elections. From as early as November 1348 the Councils established that the communal councils should provide for the election of the captains⁸⁹⁾, although what this meant in practice emerged only over the course of the subsequent two and a half years. In July 1349 a law laid down that captains should be elected by the Consiglio Maggiore in the same way as the syndics of the Podestà⁹⁰⁾.

Sixteen months later a further modification was introduced to the effect that in future four of the eight captains were to be chosen from among the members of the Consiglio Maggiore itself⁹¹⁾. The actual method of appointment was, however, only clarified in a law of March 1352 when the Priors invoked the use

of the secret scrutiny⁹²⁾.

The justification for these moves was always put in terms which emphasized the "good and utility" of Or S. Michele⁹³⁾. The Priors may indeed have been correct in assuming that the existing electoral system did need overhauling, particularly if Villani was right in his account of the scramble for office by men wishing to profit from the company's inheritance after the plague⁹⁴⁾. However, one should also not ignore the possibility that the appointment of the captains by communal agencies may have helped the Priors in their efforts to obtain loans at a time when the Government was particularly short of funds. That this may have been one of the basic motives is suggested by a provvisione in March 1366, by which the Commune appointed the company's treasurers⁹⁵⁾, and another of 1381 when the Consiglio Maggiore was given the duty to elect Or S. Michele's scrivano and ragionieri⁹⁶⁾.

Although the Commune was concerned principally with Or S. Michele, the other main charities- the Misericordia and Bigallo- also attracted the attention of the Priors. Both companies had been enriched by the Great Plague, and the Commune once again stepped in to provide for the election of the captains⁹⁷⁾. Finally in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries the Government coordinated its policy towards these three charities. Provisions of 1388⁹⁸⁾ and 1408⁹⁹⁾ laid down that none of their captains could combine office in the company with a post in the Commune, thus avoiding potential conflicts of interest or neglect of confraternal duties. Then between 1416 and 1417 the Priors ruled that the captains of Or S. Michele and the Bigallo could no longer elect the provveditori, notary or treasurers by themselves, but had to introduce twenty-two arroti to form a larger electoral college¹⁰⁰⁾.

The way in which the Priors influenced the elections of the leading officials of the large charitable companies was one of the most obvious forms of official interference in the affairs

of confraternities in the Trecento. However, companies could also be subjected to more indirect pressure to adopt the main features of the secret scrutiny. For example, in 1377 the compagnia di S. Zanobi at the height of its popularity was pressured by its "amatori e seguaci" among the citizens of Florence to correct the "ignoranze" of its old ways and to introduce the scrutiny for the appointment of captains¹⁰¹⁾. Although this was an exceptional episode, since the company had become an important centre for lay devotion during the papal Interdict of Florence¹⁰²⁾, it is revealing that even the public should have been sufficiently concerned about electoral practices to demand that the company change its customs. Indeed this points to the close relationship in the Florentine mind between the quality of leadership of a confraternity and the spiritual health of its members.

The changes which have been traced in the organisation of Florentine confraternities were made in response to both internal and external pressures. The expansion of the activities of many companies led to an expanded bureaucracy with increased recourse to professionals such as singers and notaries. At the same time there was a move towards making the captains more accountable to the membership. Provveditori were created to make sure that all officials were fulfilling their proper functions and more power was often granted to the spiritual corrector. The captains were further checked by modifications to election procedures, especially with the introduction of the secret scrutiny. The rate at which confraternities changed their practices, however, varied according to their size. The smaller companies introduced changes slowly, but the large ones were pressured directly by the Commune, as part of the Government's policy to control these charitable societies. Thus by the early Quattrocento the majority of companies had evolved a fairly similar organisation which required little modification during the subsequent centuries.

FOOTNOTES

1. Precise information about the involvement of religious in either the foundation of confraternities or the compilation of their statutes has rarely survived. However, the fairly lengthy passages in many confraternity statutes which outline their para-liturgical ceremonies do presuppose the presence and advice of a priest or friar with first-hand knowledge of the Church's official liturgy. Meersseman, Ordo, II, 716-717, also suggests that a late fifteenth-century confraternity might have used a printed source as a model, although it is probable that this would have been supplied by the company's frate correttore, who would then have helped them to adapt the Office for their own purposes. Friars were present when both the statutes of the laudesi companies in S. Maria Novella and SS. Annunziata were revised in the mid-fifteenth century: S. Pier Martire (1447), prologue, f 3r: "Maestro Domenico di Bartholomeo, Maestro in Sacra Theologia del Ordine di Frati Predicatori, Frate Chimento di Vanni del detto ordine"; 1451 statutes of the laudesi di SS. Annunziata: "conposti e ordinati per me Frate Mariano, Lectore in Theologia...": Cap. CRS 6, f 4r.
2. On membership of Florentine confraternities see Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 67-77 and on the compagnia di S. Paolo Ibid., 111-120.
3. See above Chapter 2 section 1 and 3 section 1.
4. For information about guild structure A. Doren, Le arti fiorentine, trans. G.B. Klein (Florence, 1940-48), I, 230-258, and the remarks by J.M. Najemy, Corporatism and Consensus in Florentine Electoral Politics, 1280-1400 (Chapel Hill, 1982), 9.
5. S. Frediano (1324), cap. I, f 1r.
6. See above chapter 2, section I (i), and F.A. D'Accone, "Le compagnie dei laudesi in Firenze durante l'Ars Nova", 253-280.
7. Discussed in Chapter 4, section 3.
8. See above Chapter 3, sections 2 (i) to (ii).
9. In addition to the term "captain", these officials were known as reggitori (S. Zanobi (1324), cap. I, f 3r) or rectori (OSM (1333), cap. XXXVIII, f 16v). The disciplinati companies, as will be seen below, could also be directed by one man instead of a board of captains. He might be called priore (S. Giovanni tra le arcore (1363), cap. I, f 3r), governatore or even correttore (S. Niccolò (c.1400), cap. I, f 1v, and office on f 9r.)
Some companies also elected a proposto, or a provost, from among

the captains: S. Zanobi (1324), cap. XXII, f 8r and S. Zanobi (1427), cap. III, f 33r; OSM (1333), cap. III, ff 4v-5r; Gesù Pellegrino (1422), cap. II, f 80r; laudesi di S. Croce (1485), cap. V, f 23v.

10. The office of captain is described in most statutes. Cf. the following: S. Gilio (1284), cap. XX, 37, XXI, 38, XXIV, 39, XXVII, 39; S. Zanobi (1324), cap. III, f 3v, IX, f 5r, XII, f 6r, XIV f 6r, XVIII, f 7v; S. Frediano (1324), cap. II, f 5r; Laudesi di S. Croce (1485), cap. V, ff 23v-24r; Laudesi di SS. Annunziata (1451), cap. II, ff 4v-5v; Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XI, 9-10; S. Niccolò (c.1400), cap. I-III, ff 1r-2r, cap. VI, f 2v; S. Francesco (1400), cap. XIV, ff 8r-9r; S. Giovanni Scalzo (1456), cap. IV, f 3v; S. Giovanni tra le arcore (1476), cap. II, ff 4r-6r; S. Domenico (1470), cap. VI, 728-729.
11. S. Frediano (1324), cap. II, f 2r.
12. Ibid., cap. II, f 2r: "e di procurare che i capitoli e gli ordinamenti nostri siano observati interamente".
13. S. Gilio (1284), cap. XLI, 42: "Li più savi e li meglori e li più fermi"; S. Frediano (1324), cap. II, f 2r: "più humili e più benigni e più pazienti che gli altri".
14. See above, Chapter 3, section 3.
15. Doren, Le arti fiorentine, I, 232.
16. S. Gilio (1284), XXII, 38; XXIV-XXVII, 39-40; XXXIV, 41; S. Zanobi (1324), cap. III, f 3v; cap. XX, f 8r; Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XII, 10-12; Gesù (1332), cap. III, ff 5v-7r.
17. The captains and counsellors of the compagnia di S. Zanobi, for example, met every Sunday: S. Zanobi (1324), cap. XXII, f 8v. Or S. Michele captains held meetings each Monday and Friday: OSM (1333), cap. IV, ff 5r-v.
18. Laudesi di S. Croce (1485), cap. XXIV, ff 32v-33r.
19. Ibid., S. Gilio (L c.14th), cap. XXV, 51, and see discussion on councillors below.
20. S. Gilio (1284), cap. XX, 37; S. Zanobi (1324), cap. XII, f 6r.
21. S. Zanobi (1427), cap. XVII, ff 46r-v; Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XXVI, 24; S. Giovanni tra le arcore (1363), cap. II, f 3v; S. Francesco (1400), cap. IV, f 3r; S. Giovanni Scalzo (1456), cap. X, ff 6v-7v.
22. See above, Chapter IV, sections 1 and 2.

23. S. Gilio (1284), cap. VI, 35; S. Zanobi (1324), cap. II, f 3v; cap. XXV, f 8v; (1427), cap. XII, f 43v; S. Frediano (1324), cap. II, f 2r; Laudesi di S. Croce (1485), cap. V, f 23v; S. Giovanni tra le arcore (1363), cap. XIV, f 6r; Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XI, 9-10; S. Niccolò (c.1400), cap. V, f 2v; cap. VI, f 2v; Gesù (1332?), cap. I, f 5r.
24. See above Table 9.1.
25. On the role of the Prior of a Dominican Priory see W.A. Hinnebusch, The History of the Dominican Order. Origins and Growth to 1500 (New York, 1965), I, 343-347.
26. S. Niccolò (c.1400), cap. I-III, ff 1r-2r, cap. VI, f 2v. Rather curiously this official was known in this company as a correttore, although the title Prior has been retained here in order to avoid confusion with the frate correttore who will be discussed later.
27. Gesù Pellegrino (1422), cap. I, f 8Or.
28. See above Chapter 3, Table 2.
29. CRS 910.7, ff 3r-65v.
30. See Chapter 3, Table 3.
31. Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 135-136, has shown that officers of the compagnia di S. Paolo in 1480 attended most meetings.
32. CRS 910.7, f 31v: 13.iii.1372.
33. Ibid.
34. Cf Chapter 3, Table 2.
35. CRS 910.7, f 11r: 30.xi.1366.
36. Ibid., f 9r: -.vii.1366. Cf Chapter 3, nn. 64-65.
37. Doren, Le arti fiorentine, I, 233.
38. See Table 9.1.
39. The office is described in the following statutes: S. Gilio (1284), cap. XL, 42, XLIII, 43; S. Zanobi (1324), cap. XXII, f 8v; S. Frediano (1324), cap. IV, f 6v; OSM (1294), cap. VI, 187, VII, 187-188; S. Agnese (1280-1298), cap. I, 55, IV, 56, XXI, 59, XXVII, 59, XLI, 63-64; S. Giovanni tra le arcore (1363), cap. XIV, f 6r; Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XXV, 23-24; S. Francesco (1400), cap. XV, f 9v.
40. On Communal Councils see Brucker, Florentine Politics and Society, 61, and the guilds, Doren, Le arti fiorentine, I, 234.

41. S. Gilio (1284), cap. XLIII, 43.
42. S. Gilio (1284), cap. XL; S. Agnese (1280-1298), cap. I, 55; OSM (1294), cap. VII, 187-188.
43. S. Agnese (1280-1298), cap. IV, 56, XXI, 59, LXVI, 71; S. Zanobi (1324), cap. XXXI, f 9v.
44. S. Agnese (1280-1298), cap. I, 55, III, 56, XI, 57, XXI, 59, XXXI, 61, XXXII, 61.
45. S. Agnese (1280-1298), cap. IV, 56, XXI, 59 and LXVI, 71.
46. S. Agnese (1280-1298), cap. LXVI, 71-72.
47. See section 3.
48. In the following statutes, for example, the captains had greater power over choosing the more minor officials than they did once the scrutiny had been introduced: S. Gilio (L. Cl4th), cap. I, 44; OSM (1294), cap. I, 184; S. Giovanni Battista tra le arcore (1363), cap. I, f 3r.
49. The office is described in the following company statutes: OSM (1333), cap. XV, ff 10r-v; S. Frediano (1438 addition), f 13r; S. Zanobi (1427), cap. VIII, ff 40v-41r; S. Pier Martire (1447), cap. V, f 4v; Laudesi di SS. Annunziata (1451), cap. VII, ff 10r-v; Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XX, 18-19; Gesù Pellegrino (1422), cap. III, ff 80v-81r; S. Francesco (1400), cap. XVIII, f 10v; S. Giovanni Scalzo (1456), cap. VI, ff 4v-5r; S. Domenico (1470), cap. VI, 729; SS. Innocenti (1480), f 11r; S. Geronimo, Costa di S. Giorgio (1491), cap. VI, ff 9r-10r.
50. S. Francesco (1400), cap. XVIII, f 10v.
51. Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XX, 18-19.
52. SS. Innocenti (1480), f 11r: "provvedere a tutti i bisogni e cose di nostra compagnia e maximamente possi e debbi fare osservare e nostri capitoli".
53. S. Zanobi (1427), cap. VIII, ff 40v-41r; S. Pier Martire (1447), cap. V, f 4v; S. Domenico (1470), cap. VI, 729; S. Giovanni Scalzo (1456), cap. VI, ff 4v-5r.
54. S. Zanobi (1427), cap. VIII, ff 40v-41r.
55. S. Domenico (1470), cap. V, 726. Indeed one of the provveditori of the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino was punished severely in 1374 because he had forgotten to return the keys for the box containing the votes cast for the scrutiny of the captains: CRS 910.7, f 41r: 20.xi.1374.

56. The office appears in the following statutes:
S. Gilio (1284), cap. V-VI, 35; S. Zanobi (1324), cap. XXV, f 8v; S. Zanobi (1427), cap. XX, f 48r; Laudesi di SS. Annunziata (1451), cap. I, f 4r, cap. II, ff 12r-v; S. Agnese (1280-1298), cap. IX, 57; Laudesi di S. Croce (1485), cap. XVIII, ff 30v-31r; Gesù (1332?), cap. II, f 5r; S. Francesco (1400), cap. V, ff 3v-4r; Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. VII, 5; SS. Innocenti (1480), cap. V, ff 28v-29r; S. Giovanni Scalzo (1456), cap. VIII, ff 5v-6r; S. Geronimo, Costa di S. Giorgio (1491), cap. XI, ff 17r-18r; S. Antonio da Padova (1466), ff 2v-3r; Assunzione (L. 15th), cap. IX, ff 10v-11r; S. Sebastiano (1474), cap. XXI, f 11v.
57. S. Agnese (1290-1298), cap. LXI, 69.
58. S. Agnese (1290-1298), cap. IV, 56, XIX, 58-59, LXI, 69, LXIV, 70, LXV-LXVII, 71-72 are meetings which involve changing statutes and at which the friar was present. Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XX, 19.
59. S. Gilio (1284), cap. V, 35.
60. See above Chapter 3, section 3.
61. Moorman, A History of the Franciscan Order, 363; D. Hay, The Church in Italy in the Fifteenth Century (Cambridge, 1977), 56-57.
62. For the compagnia di S. Pier Martire see the 1447 statutes, cap. I, f 3v, and discussion in Chapter 4, section iii(b), and for the laudesi di SS. Annunziata the statutes of 1451, cap. II, ff 4v-7r.
63. OSM (1294), cap. III, 185, IV, 185.
64. The 1324 statutes of the compagnia di S. Zanobi do not mention that the company had a special chaplain: "E lli regitori debbiano si procurare colli signori della predecta chiesa che in honore della Beata Vergine Madonna S. Maria in quella mattina si debbia celebrare messa solennemente": S. Zanobi (1324), cap. III, f 3v.
65. The Archbishop's interest in confraternities is evident in the considerable number of episcopal approbations which are appended to the statutes from the 1420s onwards. See Chapter 1, nn. 44, 48.
66. Richa, Notizie istoriche, I, 24.
67. S. Zanobi (1427), cap. XX, f 48r: "Il sacerdote in luogo di Gesù Christo et i capitani e consiglieri in luogo de' sancti apostoli".
68. The compagnia di S. Geronimo on the Costa di S. Giorgio drew

its corrector and three confessors "de' monaci della Badia di Firenze ed ogni altro ordine monasticho e chosì di S. Agostino, S. Domenico, S. Francesco purchè sieno d' Osservanza regolare": Cap. CRS 81, cap. XIII, ff 18v-20v; the compagnia di S. Paolo elected four correctors from the Badia di Firenze, S. Marco, Cestello, and the Observant Franciscans: S. Paolo (1472), ff 15r-v; among the eight priests employed by the compagnia di S. Jeronimo in the Ospedale di S. Matteo, one came from S. Domenico di Fiesole, another from S. Spirito, and a third from S. Girolamo di Fiesole: S. Jeronimo (1410), f 20v. It should be noted that the guardians of the fanciulli companies met under the direction of the Priors of the Badia Fiorentina and S. Marco: S. Orlandi, S. Antonino. Arcivescovo di Firenze, II, 211-213, 313-316.

69. The earliest example of the appointment of visitors of the sick is in S. Agnese (1280-1298), cap. LXIII, 70. The 1324 statutes of the compagnia di S. Zanobi suggest that the captains performed this function (cap. XXI, f 6r), although by 1427 special visitors were chosen: cap. II, f 32r. See also Laudesi di SS. Annunziata (1451), cap. V, ff 8v-9r; Laudesi di S. Croce (1485), cap. XII, f 27v: "De nostri infermieri"; S. Giovanni tra le arcore (1363), cap. II, f 3v; Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. XXVI, 24; S. Francesco (1400), cap. IV, f 3r; S. Giovanni Scalzo (1456), cap. X, f 6v; S. Domenico (1470), cap. IV, 723.
70. As has been seen (Chapter 5, n. 49) in 1318 the Government granted to the captains of Or S. Michele the right to elect syndics rather than convening a meeting of the whole membership. This privilege was extended to eleven other companies in 1329: see Diplomatico di S. Maria Novella, 29.iii.1329. (The date in the relevant volume of Prov. Reg. is missing.) The compagnia di S. Zanobi incorporated this privilege into its statutes on 12.iii.1330: CRS 2170, cap. XXVI, f 12v. Another company, the laudesi di S. Frediano, was not included in the original law and petitioned the Government for the right to elect their own syndics on 30.v.1365: Prov. Reg. 52, f 15lr.
71. S. Pier Martire (1447), cap. VI, ff 4v-5r.
72. The administration of guilds is outlined in Doren, Le arti fiorentine, I, 231-249.
73. Doren, Le arti fiorentine, I, 249-250, although the guilds called them syndics.
74. This is an aspect of guild life which has been virtually ignored. However, see the few remarks by Doren, Le arti fiorentine, II, 236-237, and on the election of festaiuoli: Ibid., I, 250.

75. Doren, Le arti fiorentine, I, 274, 283-284.
76. For an outline of elections for communal offices in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries see G. Guidi, "I sistemi elettorali agli uffici del Comune di Firenze nel primo Trecento: Il sorgere della elezione per squittino (1300-1328)", ASI, CXXX (1972), 345-407.
Il governo della città-repubblica di Firenze del primo quattrocento (Florence, 1981), I, parts IV-VI.
 However, for the most recent and more accurate exposition see J.M. Najemy, Corporatism and Consensus in Florentine Electoral Politics. For elections to guilds see Doren, Le arti fiorentine, I, 260-298.
77. S. Gilio (1284), cap. I, 34, and S. Zanobi (1324), cap. I, ff 3r-v stipulated a six-month term of office, while the following are examples of four months: S. Zanobi (1427), cap. V, f 35r; Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. II, 2-3; S. Niccolò (c. 1400), cap. II, f 1v; S. Francesco (1400), cap. XIII, 8r; S. Domenico (1470), cap. IV, 723.
78. The period of the divieto varied not just between confraternities, but also between offices: S. Zanobi (1324), cap. I, f 3v: captains, councillors and treasurers have a divieto for two years from day office ended; S. Frediano (1324), cap. I, f 4v: captains, treasurers and councillors have divieto of respectively three, two and one year; S. Pier Martire (1447), cap. I, f 3v: captains have one year divieto, but other officials are apparently not similarly restricted; Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. II-VI, 2-4: captains, councillors, treasurers, provveditori and infermieri have a divieto for one year; S. Maria in S. Maria Sopr'Arno (L. Cl5th), f 4r: the governatore has divieto for one year and all other officials for only four months. One can, for example, see the divieto in operation at the compagnia di S. Pier Martire between 1312 to 1341: Piero Nardi was captain in 1323, 1318, 1320, 1326 and 1333. His offices were separated from those of his sons by at least twelve months: the first, Giovanni, was treasurer in 1327, Francesco captain in 1336, and Lorenzo was treasurer in 1331 and 1335. See Conv. Relig. Sopp. 102.291, ff 1r-54r. On the divieto laws established for the communal offices in 1328 see Najemy, Corporatism and Consensus, 108-109.
79. S. Gilio (1284), cap. XLI, 42.
80. Cf also the descriptions of elections in the following: OSM (1294), cap. I, 183-84; S. Zanobi (1324), cap. I, ff 3r-v; S. Frediano (1324), cap. I, f 4v; S. Giovanni tra le arcore (1363), cap. I, f 3r.
81. S. Gilio (1284), cap. XLI, 42.
82. S. Gilio (L Cl4th), cap. I, 43-44.
83. S. Gilio (L Cl4th), cap. I, 44, XXV, 51.

84. See G. Villani, Cronica, X, 108; G. Guidi, "I sistemi elettorali agli uffici del Comune di Firenze nel primo Trecento", 396-407; J.M. Najemy, Corporatism and Consensus, 99-125.
85. G. Villani, X, 108: "come dovessero riformare la città di reggimento e signoria per modo comune, acciochè si levassono le sette tra' cittadini".
86. The Government used the Mercanzia to force the Arti to adopt the secret scrutiny: Doren, Le arti fiorentine, I, 280-284.
87. Gesù Pellegrino (1354), cap. II, 2-3.
88. See, for example, the careers of two notaries in the compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino between 1347 and 1360:

DATE	'Ser Francesco Masi'	Ser Nello Ghetti
1347: March	treasurer	councillor
July	syndic	-
November	proveditor	-
1348: March	-	-
July	proveditor + syndic	-
November	captain	councillor
1349: March	councillor	captain
July	-	councillor
November	-	proveditor
1350: March	captain	-
July	councillor	syndic
November	-	-
1351: March	syndic	-
July	proveditor + <u>capodieco</u> *	councillor
November	-	-
1352: March	-	councillor
July	treasurer	-
November	oratory official	proveditor + syndic + oratory official
1353: March	proveditor	official for masses
July	official for masses	Ibid. + redactor of statutes
November	<u>capodieco</u>	-
1354: March	-	-
July	-	-
November	captain	councillor + <u>capodieco</u>
1355: March	councillor	proveditor
July	-	councillor
November	proveditor + <u>capodieco</u>	captain
1356: March	-	councillor
July	-	-
November	-	-
1357: March	-	proveditor + <u>capodieco</u>
July	-	-
November	councillor	-
1358: March	<u>capodieco</u>	<u>capodieco</u>
July	captain	councillor
November	councillor	-
1359: March	-	-
July	-	<u>capodieco</u>
November	proveditor	-
1360: March	-	-
July	-	-
November	<u>capodieco</u> + oratory official	-

* = official appointed to oversee the behaviour of about ten members.

89. Provv. Reg. 36, f 36v: 13.xi.1348. These measures are discussed in Chapter 6, section 2.
90. Provv. Reg. 36, f 104v: 20.vii.1349. The syndics of the Podestà were elected from 1344 by the Priors, the gonfalonieri of the companies, the twelve Buonomini and the captains of the twenty-one guilds: Guidi, Il governo della città-repubblica, II, 164-165.
91. Provv. Reg. 38, ff 144r-v: 26.xi.1350.
92. Provv. Reg. of 30.iii.1352: La Sorsa, 256.
93. Provv. Reg. 38, f 144v: "Ac etiam pro bono et utili dicte Sotietatis".
94. Villani, I, 7.
95. Provv. Reg. 53, f 122v: 12.iii.1366.
96. Provv. Reg. 70, f 44v: 26.iv.1381.
97. See Chapter 8 n.4 for the Misericordia; Libri Fabarum 31, f 6v indicates that the Bigallo's officials were being elected by the Consiglio Maggiore by 19.v.1352.
98. Provv. Reg. 77, f 170v: 21.x.1388.
99. Provv. Reg. of -.ix.1408: OSM I, ff 70v-71r.
100. Provv. Reg. 107, ff 312v-314v: 22.ii.1416: Provv. Reg. 108, f 76r: 26.v.1417.
101. CRS 2170.1, ff 15v-16r, and especially f 16r: 1.x.1377.
102. CRS 2170.1, ff 15v-16v record the growth in the citizens' devotion to the company and the captains undertaking to fulfill the following obligations during the Interdict: (i) arrange for the celebration of a hundred masses during each term of office; (ii) admit women into the company and allow them to participate in its spiritual merits; (iii) introduce the secret scrutiny. On the laity's reaction to the Interdict see R.C. Trexler, The Spiritual Power, and especially 128-135.

CONCLUSION

The religious confraternity was one of a number of corporations to which a Florentine might belong. Its organisation was similar to those groups which catered for both political and professional interests from the Commune, Parte Guelfa and guilds down to the gonfalone¹⁾. The confraternity was, however, distinguished from other corporations by one very important feature- it catered principally for the spiritual rather than secular needs of the laity.

The multiplication of religious companies in late-medieval Florence was encouraged by the Mendicants, who saw these societies as a means to encourage the laity to deepen their personal devotion and to ensure that they fulfilled the basic sacramental duties which had been laid down by the Lateran Council of 1215. The single most important influence for the spread of confraternities in Florence was the Dominican Order, one of whose most celebrated members, St. Peter Martyr, is supposed to have inspired the foundation of a series of lay companies. These groups were designed to combat heresy both in an active campaign of propaganda and by encouraging lay devotion. However, the threat of the Cathars soon faded away and the Dominican laudesi society, which had been founded by St. Peter Martyr, provided a model which was imitated by laymen in churches throughout Florence. By 1350 there were at least thirteen laudesi societies in the city²⁾. The popularity of these groups can be attributed principally to their success in involving members in the enactment of para-liturgical services, at a time when the official Church tended to emphasize the importance of the priest to the exclusion of the laity.

The influence of the friars can also be seen in the foundation of another type of company, the flagellants, who emphasized

one of the main themes of Mendicant theology-penitence. Their devotion reflected the friars' emphasis on the incarnate life of the Son of God and was seen as a way in which the laity could participate in the sufferings of Christ. The majority of disciplinati groups were founded from the second half of the fourteenth century so that by 1440-1460 they accounted for at least 50 percent of all confraternities in Florence³⁾.

The popularity of the flagellants in the Quattrocento with their rather exclusive penitential exercises would seem to be incompatible with the current notion that Florentine confraternities shared in the general trend in civic life towards increased display in public festivals⁴⁾. However, the interest in penance does not exclude the growth of lay festive activity among other types of company. Indeed the laudesi societies had always specialised in the performance of lauds and from the second half of the fourteenth century many of them employed professional musicians and singers to maintain high standards of performance and make their festivals more splendid.

Although some laudesi companies made floats for the processions on the Feastday of St. John the Baptist, few were involved in the enactment of religious drama⁵⁾. Instead this appears to have been the speciality of the new societies of boys, which were founded in the fifteenth century, although it should be pointed out that apart from the age of members⁶⁾, the fanciulli groups were not very different from the adult companies on which they were modelled.

Another factor which affected the development of the laudesi rather than the flagellants was the tendency for the former to encourage rather than reject bequests. The compagnia di S. Pier Martire was an extreme case, for by the mid-fifteenth century it was devoted almost exclusively to the administration of property for the friars of S. Maria Novella, who performed commemorative services on behalf of the company's benefactors. However, the influence of bequests on the development of the smaller, less

wealthy laudesi societies was generally less obvious. They were involved in the enactment of fewer anniversary masses and the administration of limited charitable trusts. However, because these companies' budgets were normally small, income and expenditure from testaments often assumed a symbolic significance far beyond their actual monetary value. The wishes of testators came to exert a subtle influence on the development of a company's priorities, whether it was performing masses for the dead or the distribution of dowries to poor girls.

By the late fifteenth century many of the laudesi companies were performing more elaborate devotional and charitable functions than had been envisaged by their founders. In comparison the practices of most flagellants changed very little. They managed to retain the simplicity of their devotional life by not accumulating property or spending money on elaborate ceremonial. However, the foundation of the compagnie della notte in the early fifteenth century does point to two ways in which the disciplinati might develop. In the first place emphasis was placed on stricter devotional practices, for members were required to spend whole nights together in prayer and penitence. Secondly these new groups made a determined effort to subsidise the poor. Although alms were limited to about six families at any one time⁷⁾, these companies' preoccupation with charity does indicate that some flagellant groups were beginning to think about the plight of the poor rather than concentrating exclusively on the furtherance of the members' own spiritual health by the enactment of penance.

The relationship between charity and devotion is a theme which is central to the history of the largest laudesi company in Florence, Or S. Michele. However, Or S. Michele was exceptional because it was the centre of a public cult which brought in a steady income from oblations and bequests. By the mid-Trecento it had become one of the wealthiest institutions in the city and attracted the attention of the State, which found itself exceptionally short of revenue. The Government used the excuse of corrupt company captains to step in to direct the inherited

income. Large sums were borrowed chiefly by the Commune, while others were channelled into construction projects including building the church of St. Anne and Orcagna's tabernacle. One should avoid, however, the temptation of attributing the gradual impoverishment of the confraternity solely to a rapacious government or greedy captains⁸⁾. Testators often left a large proportion of their estate to individuals or corporations in addition to Or S. Michele. The most significant recipients were heirs, who claimed a high proportion of the company's income in the years immediately following the Black Death.

Or S. Michele's other main claim to fame was its alms-giving. This changed dramatically in the mid-fourteenth century, for not only did the company have much larger amounts of aid available but also the way in which the charity was spent altered considerably. Before the Black Death the company had concentrated most of its income on the limosina per la città under which system thousands of paupers were each given a few soldi. During periods of famine money was also spent on giving small sums to the crowds of starving citizens who collected every week in the grain market.

However, with the improvement of living standards after the Black Death, the traditional city-wide system came to be adapted to administer a new policy, which was to provide more substantial individual subsidies and especially to give dowries to girls who had been orphaned during the plague.

The new principles which were introduced to govern the administration of Or S. Michele's charity meant that a much smaller number of people were given alms, even when standards of living dropped during the depression of 1384 to 1393. Indeed by restricting their clientele, Or S. Michele's captains were able to exercise a much more personal influence on those who received alms. Personal favouritism may indeed have been the reason for some of the criticisms of company officials. Although a series of communal

laws attributed the corruption of the captains as the root of Or S. Michele's difficulties, one should also bear in mind that the construction of the oratory itself proved a constant drain on the company's finances, especially when the Commune withdrew its subsidy. The captains were faced with the constant problem of having to reconcile disparate interests: on the one hand, the needs of the poor and on the other the completion of the building in order to avoid the spoiling of the tabernacle and to respond to the increasingly heavy pressure of the Government.

The combination of all these factors meant that by the late fourteenth to early fifteenth centuries Or S. Michele was reduced effectively to a hollow shell: the oratory was nearly completed, but the company's liquid assets were fast diminishing. The public's support for the cult of the Madonna had waned so that little money was received either from oblations or new bequests, while most of the income from the company's property was spent immediately on commemorative obligations. The reduction in the popularity of the Madonna as a shrine may explain partly why the guilds were so slow to decorate their tabernacles. The long-term result of the Commune's intervention was that the Government became involved closely in maintaining the cult. Or S. Michele remained the centre for a series of public festivals which included those sponsored by the guilds, as well as the Feastday of St. Anne when the city commemorated the eviction of Walter of Brienne.

Or S. Michele was not the only charity to suffer from demands made by the Government. The Misericordia shared a similar history in the second half of the fourteenth century. The Commune borrowed considerable sums of money and the company also spent a large amount on building an oratory. Indeed such was the financial state of the Misericordia in 1425 that the Government decided to unite it with the Bigallo, which meant that the Misericordia became eclipsed temporarily by an organisation which specialised in administering a series of small hospitals in Florence and the contado.

The decline of the traditional charities meant that by the early

fifteenth century there was an absence in Florence of any substantial private institution which distributed alms. Although the condition of the poor was undoubtedly much improved when compared with earlier periods of real depression, there were large sectors of the population who remained at subsistence level and who could be plunged quickly into indigence either by personal misfortune or more general economic crises. Little evidence survives to suggest which organisations, if any, took over the role of the large fourteenth century charities. A series of smaller groups were, however, founded which catered for the poor among their other activities. In addition to the compagnie della notte, confraternities of artisans emerged to provide not only the traditional devotional framework of other lay companies, but also a system of social assurance which included a series of small hospices catering for the sick and old. The foundation of the Buonomini di S. Martino in 1442 also points to the continued need in Florence for charity. However, it should be pointed out that the Buonomini were following the policy which had already been begun by Or S. Michele in the early fifteenth century by concentrating on the families of poor mastercraftsmen rather than the real 'miserabili'.

We have therefore seen a gradual movement towards a greater exclusiveness in charity during the hundred years between the famine of the 1340s and the foundation of the Buonomini. The process began with Or S. Michele's attempt to distribute its funds to a large number of impoverished Florentines. Then the company went on to subsidise a more select clientele who each received larger individual subsidies. This led to a concentration on a more limited number of artisan families who were supported only through periods of temporary difficulty.

The developments among both the devotional and charitable companies demanded an increased bureaucracy in order to cater for their new functions. On the one hand, the laudesi societies, and Or S. Michele in particular, employed professional singers and musicians

to maintain their cult, and on the other they appointed syndics and notaries to take care of the increasing amount of business involved in the receipt of bequests. Although the flagellants normally had fewer officials, the new compagnie della notte created special limosinieri who were responsible for identifying and subsidising the poor.

One of the effects of the multiplication in the number of officials was that the captains lost direct control over certain areas of the company's activities such as dealing with bequests and even visiting the sick. Although delegation by itself need not have implied loss of power, it did when combined with a move towards making the captains more accountable to the membership. This was achieved by appointing provveditori, whose main function was to watch the activities of all officials, as well as emphasizing the authority of the company's frate correttore or chaplain. At the same time the captains' control over the appointment of their own successors and other officials was limited as election procedures were modified in accordance with the new techniques of the secret scrutiny. The electoral college was widened to incorporate a larger percentage of the membership. Under Government pressure this procedure was adopted by the large charities shortly after the Black Death. The majority of devotional companies with their smaller patrimony were not subjected to the same official pressure and adopted the scrutiny gradually under their own volition. However, by the early Quattrocento the majority of confraternities in Florence conformed to a similar administrative and electoral system which came to be modified only slightly during the subsequent century.

Very broadly, then, the changes in the administrative structure of confraternities reflected the developments of their activities. However, as has been seen in earlier chapters, statutes mirror only the formal character of an organisation and it is necessary to study other types of records in order to show how far their ideals were put into practice. The high percentage of non-attendance and the frequency of punishments administered by even the stricter flagellant companies suggests that one should view the late-medieval confraternity as providing a flexible rather than rigid framework for laymen who wished to become better Christians through devotional and charitable works.

FOOTNOTES

1. On the organisation of the Parte Guelfa see E. Bonaini, "Statuto della Parte Guelfa di Firenze compilato nel MCCCXXXV", Giornale storico degli archivi toscani, I (1957), 1-41, and on the Parte's development A. Brown, "The Guelf party in 15th century Florence: the transition from communal to Medicean state", Rinascimento, XX (1980), 41-86. The best study of the Gonfalone is D.V. and F.W. Kent, Neighbours and Neighbourhood in Renaissance Florence: The District of the Red Lion in the Fifteenth Century (New York, 1982); see especially 13-47.
2. See Chapter 1, Table 2.
3. Chapter 1, Table 2.
4. M.B. Becker, "Aspects of lay piety in early Renaissance Florence", The Pursuit of Holiness, 195; R.C. Trexler, Public Life, 252-256, 394-398.
5. The exception was the compagnia di S. Agnese in S. Maria del Carmine, on which see Chapter 2, section 1 (iii).
6. Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 64 n. 72, even points out that there was considerable overlap of ages between the boys' and adult companies.
7. See Chapter 8 n.87.
8. Cf M. Villani, Cronaca, 1, 7.

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- (iii) Archivio della Compagnia di S. Jacopo della notte
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- (iv) Archivio della Compagnia di S. Jeronimo
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fratelli di questa venerabile compagnia
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stati di questo sancto luogo
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- (vi) Archivio della Compagnia di S. Niccolò del Ceppo
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Capitani del Bigallo

2.ii.	Deliberazioni e stanziamenti della Misericordia,	1358-1366
2.iii.	" " " " " ,	1385-1412
5.i.	Deliberazioni della Misericordia e Bigallo	, 1425-1429
5.iii.	Stanziamenti, partiti e ricordi, della Misericordia e Bigallo	1435-1437
651	Entrata e Uscita del Bigallo	1400-1408
724	Creditori e debitori della Misericordia	1349-1397
729	Inventario di tutti e beni immobili del Bigallo	1379
737	Debitori e creditori della Misericordia e Bigallo	1431-1433
746	" " " " " "	1446-1447
1668	Inventarii di arredi della cappella del Bigallo e di altre cappelle di suo patronato	1436-1584
1669	Statuti, privilegi, bolle...provvisioni,... e ricordi diversi interessante la storia del Bigallo	1318-1733
1677	Compre fatte per preti e luoghi religiosi	1427-1469

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I. Raccolta di provvisioni della Signoria relativi ai capitani,
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1(bis).	Stanziamenti	1361
2.	"	1364
3.	"	1365
4.	"	1366
5.	"	1367
6.	"	1370
7.	"	1370
8.	"	1372-1373
9.	"	1373

10.	Stanziamenti	1376
11.	"	1378-1379
12.	"	1380
13.	"	1380-1381
14.	"	1381
15.	"	1383
16.	"	1388
17.	"	1402-1403
17(a)	Stanziamenti (1408); debitori e creduti (1450); offerte (1451)	
18.	"	1409-1410
19.	"	1409-1410
20.	"	1412-1413
21.	"	1413-1414
22.	"	1414-1415
23.	"	1415-1416
24.	"	1416-1417
25.	"	1416-1419
26.	"	1435-1437
55.	Ricordi, 1349-1358	
56.	Ricordi, 1366-1369	
57.	Creditori e debitori, 1348-1368	
58.	Ricordi, 1359-1361	
145.	Libro contenente copie di lodi e contratti di concordie, pagamenti e fatti dai Capitani, 1341	
146.	Uscita, 1348, 1351-1353	
149.	Libro di possessi di beni, 1348	
150.	Prospetto di beni attenenti all'oratorio dell'Or S. Michele, 1391-1393	
205.	Danari ritratti dalle vendita di candeli, 1369-1379	
206.	Creditori e debitori, 1370	
207.	Ibid., 1370-1371	
209.	Ricordanze, 1387-1389	
210.	Creditori e debitori, 1403-1404	
211.	" " " 1404-1405	
212.	" " " 1406-1407	
213.	" " " 1407-1408	
214.	" " " 1409-1411	

- 221. Entrata e Uscita di cera, 1348-1351
- 222. Cera venduta davanti all'oratorio, 1352-1362
- 223. Ragione di cera, 1357-1358
- 224. Entrata e Uscita di cera, 1360-1364
- 225. Ibid., 1361-1364
- 226. Cera venduta davanti all'oratorio, 1361-1364
- 229. Cera somministrata all'oratorio, 1363-1365
- 230. Cera per vendersi davanti all'oratorio, 1377-1378
- 231. Ibid., 1388-1394
- 233. Libro di Barone Fornaio, 1358-1362
- 234. Stipendiati della compagnia, 1395-1405
- 244. Uscita, 1347
- 245. Uscita, 1347
- 246. Uscita, 1349
- 247. Deliberazioni, 1349-1350
- 248. Entrata e uscita, 1324-1325
- 249. Entrata, 1350
- 250. Entrata, 1350
- 251. Uscita, 1350
- 251(bis) Entrata, 1351
- 251(ter) Entrata, 1350
- 252. Uscita, 1352
- 253. Entrata e uscita del' oratorio, 1352-1357
- 254. Registro di elemosine, 1356-1357
- 255. Spese fatti per maritare o monacare fanciulle, restaurare
chiese, e far elemosine, 1349-1356
- 256. Entrata e uscita, 1370-1371
- 260. Spese occorse per la costruzione dell'oratorio, 1412-1414
- 261. Ibid., 1416-1418
- 262. Entrata e uscita, 1453
- 460. Registro dei testamenti a favore di Or S. Michele ($\frac{1}{4}$ di
S. Spirito), 1363-1564
- 461. Ibid. ($\frac{1}{4}$ di S. Croce), 1300-1568
- 462. Ibid. ($\frac{1}{4}$ di S. Maria Novella), 1363-1568
- 463. Ibid. ($\frac{1}{4}$ di S. Giovanni), 1340-1499
- 464. Entrata e uscita dei lasciti, 1378-1379
- 465. Descrizione dei beni mobili e immobili della compagnia, 1433
- 470. (mostra 48) Registro dei testamenti, 1300-1347
- 478. Capitoli, 1591

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- 6 Compagnia di S. Sebastiano e delle laude della Vergine Maria e di S. Filippo e S. Gherardo, SS. Annunziata, 1451
- 29 S. Paolo, Via dell'Acqua, 1472-1520
- 45 S. Michele Arcangelo, Piazza S. Ambrogio, 1568
- 81 S. Girolomo, detta la Buca, S. Giorgio sulla Costa, 1491
- 190 S. Croce dei tessitori, 1644
- 194 S. Concordia, S. Barnaba, 1437
- 354 S. Giovanni Battista tra le arcore, 1363
- 439 S. Niccolò, S. Maria del Carmine, c.1400
- 452 Purificazione di Maria Vergine o Servi di Maria, Monte Oliveto, 1297
- 502 Gesù Pellegrino, S. Maria Novella, 1573
- 606 S. Maria delle Neve, S. Ambrogio, 1447
- 635 S. Benedetto detta dei Neri, S. Salvatore dei Camaldoli, 1385
- 719 SS. Innocenti, S. Maria Novella, 1480
- 854 S. Andrea dei Purgatori, S. Candida, 1451
- 882 Arcangelo Raffaello, detta il Raffa, S. Maria della Scala, 1482
- 891 Scuola di S. Maria di Venezia, 1382-1383

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The following three companies are listed separately:

1. Compagnia di S. Agnese, e di S. Maria delle laude

- 4 Partiti, 1484-1509
- 24 Entrata e uscita dei sindaci, 1440-1447
- 29 Descrizione dei beni della compagnia, 1447-1473
- 98 Entrata e uscita, 1425-1441
- 99 Entrata e uscita, 1448-1474
- 100 Entrata e uscita dei sindaci, 1466-1481
- 114 Debitori e creditori, 1447-1465
- 115 Campione: lasciti e legati, 1460-1510

5. Compagnia di S. Frediano, detta la Bruciata

- 1 Capitoli, 1489
- 4 Libro dei partiti, 1436-1470
- 29 Entrata e uscita, 1333-1361
- 30 Entrata e uscita, 1361-1394
- 88 Entrata e uscita, 1333-1414
- 125 Registro dei morti che si sotterrano, 1336-1384

6. Compagnia di S. Maria delle laude e S. Spirito detta del Piccione

- 1. ~~Memoriale~~ del sindaco, 1419-1427
- 60 Entrata e uscita, 1455-1457
- 78. Inventarii, pietanze, partiti, ricordi e debitori e creditori dell'Ospedale di Via Chiara delle convertite, 1444-1521

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107.1 Capitoli, 1485

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137.6 Capitoli, 1466

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203.1 A Contratti, 1420-1697

B Memorie e interessi diverse, 1420-1773

Compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino e della Misericordia del Salvatore

903.G Libro d'inventari , 1421-1638

910.6 Deliberazioni e partiti, 1335-1366

7 Ibid., 1364-1404

8 Ibid., 1404-1420

918.34 Entrata e uscita, 1343-1351

35 Registro 'dei ufiziali' e entrata e uscita, 1407-1423

919.36 Entrata e uscita, 1410-1430

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1579.1 Libro de' fondatori, 1434-1485

2A Memorie dell'origine e vicende della compagnia, 1438-1765

1592.37 Debitori per le tasse dei fratelli, conto di fornai, conto delle limosine, 1477-1487

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- 2170.1 Capitoli, 1324-1480
 - .4 Libro de' testamenti, 1313-1518
- 2171.A Frammenti di libri maestri, 1403-1464
 - B " dell'entrata , 1353-1494
 - C " dell'uscita , 1369-1469
- 2176.12 Libro di ricordi e partiti, 1378-1383
 - .13 " " " " " , 1477-1483
- 2177.17 Libro di deliberazioni, 1442-1445
 - .19 Libro di partiti e memorie, c.1478
- 2178.23 Registro d'obblighi, 1407-1416
- 2181.33(i) Frammenti di debitori e creditori, 1427-1438
- 2182.36 Entrata e uscita, 1333-1353

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92. Convento di S. Croce

390 Compagnia di S. Francesco, capitoli, 1400

102 Convento di S. Maria Novella

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292 Uscita, 1312-1341

293 Entrata, 1370-1379, 1380-1382

294 Entrata e uscita, 1389-1402

295 " " " , 1402-1414

298 " " " , 1455-1463

301 " " " , 1482-1496

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311 Beni venduti per gli uficiali (I.E. Otto de' preti), 1377

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APPENDIX I

CONFRATERNITIES MEETING IN FLORENCE, 1240-1499 (provisional list)

The following appendix does not pretend to be exhaustive for while it may include all the main confraternities of late-medieval Florence others will undoubtedly be discovered by further research.

KEY

- (i) Title of confraternity
- (ii) Location of oratory
- (iii) Foundation date or earliest reference
- (iv) Main function
- (v) Source
- (vi) Other relevant information

Abbreviations

I Archival sources

Unless otherwise indicated all MSS are in the ASF.

Two sources cited most frequently are:

- (i) Del Migliore, "Zibaldone": F. del Migliore, "Registro delle compagnie di Firenze", BNF, Magl. XXV.418.
- (ii) 1454 processional list: "Regole di frati come vanno a processione seconda la nota del vescovo Antonino, come mi dette Baccio Falsommonstra", Signoria e Balìa, Carte del Corredo 45, f 18v. (Printed in Appendix 2a).
- (iii) "Sepoltuario": Sepoltuario di S. Maria Novella: MSS 621

II Secondary works

All books and articles, unless title is cited in full, appear in the Select Bibliography.

- 1
 - (i) S. Agate
 - (ii) S. Agata (?)
 - (iii) Earliest ref. 1325
 - (iv) Devotional
 - (v) Davidsohn, Forschungen, IV, 440.
 - (vi)

- 2
 - (i) S. Agnese e S. Maria delle laude
 - (ii) S. Maria del Carmine
 - (iii) 1249
 - (iv) Laudesi
 - (v) 1584 statutes: Acquisti e doni, 44, f 5r.
 - (vi)

- 3
 - (i) S. Alberto bianco
 - (ii) S. Maria del Carmine
 - (iii) Between 1411 and 1429
 - (iv) Flagellant
 - (v) Catasto 293, f 3Or (1429)
 - (vi) "era già principiata nel cimitero di detto convento" (Magl. II.IV. 379, f 353) Festival of St. Albert introduced by Carmelites in 1411: Butler, The Lives of the Saints, III, 639.

- 4
 - (i) S. Andrea
 - (ii) S. Candida fuori della porta alla Croce
 - (iii) 15.ii.1451
 - (iv) Devotional company of "purgatore e cardatore"
 - (v) Cap. CRS 854, f 1r
 - (vi)

- 5 (i) SS. Annunziata
 (ii) Ospedale degli Innocenti
 (iii) Pre-1454
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) 1454 processional list
 (vi)
- 6 (i) S. Antonio Abbate
 (ii) S. Antonio dentro alla porta a Faenza
 (iii) 1438
 (iv) Boys'
 (v) 1502 capitoli: BRF, Ricc. MS 1748
 (vi)
- 7 (i) S. Antonio Abbate detta "la Bucha"
 (ii) Oratory of S. Antonio Abbate, Via degli Alfani
 (iii) 14.ii.1485
 (iv) Flagellant: one of the compagnie della notte
 (v) Archivio della compagnia di S. Antonio Abbate, capitoli, ff 3v-4r.
 (vi) Began in S. Cristoforo, moved to SS. Annunziata in 1486 and
 1490-1504 built own oratory: ibid. and CRS 112.13, f 1r.
- 8 (i) S. Antonio da Padova
 (ii) S. Maria Sopr'Arno
 (iii) 21.ix.1466
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) 1466 statutes: CRS 137.vi., f 1v.
 (vi)

- 9 (i) S. Antonio da Padova e della Nunziata
(ii) S. Giorgio, Costa di S. Giorgio
(iii) 1441
(iv) Boys' devotional
(v) See the statutes of the compagnia di S. Gerolamo, which founded the boys' group: Cap. CRS 195, f 21r.
(vi)
- 10 (i) Arcangelo Raffaello o Natività di Gesù Cristo
(ii) Ospedale di S. Maria della Scala
(iii) 1411
(iv) Boys' devotional
(v) Cap. CRS 882, Prologue.
(vi)
- 11 (i) Arcangelo Raffaello detta la Raffa
(ii) S. Spirito
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
(iv) Flagellant
(v) 1454 processional list
(vi)
- 12 (i) Assunzione della Nostra Donna
(ii) Spedale di S. Piero Novello e dei Ridolfi
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1429
(iv) Devotional: patron of Cappella della Assunta
(v) Del Migliore "Zibaldone", f 4v; Bigallo 1677, f 25lv.
(vi)

- 13 (i) S. Barbara
(ii) SS. Annunziata
(iii) 21.ii.1448
(iv) Devotional company of German and Flemish woolworkers
(v) CRS 203.2 A, under date; Paatz, Die Kirchen von Florenz, I, 101.
(vi) Connected with the compagnia di S. Cornelio in S. Salvatore di Camaldoli and compagnia di S. Caterina in S. Maria del Carmine.
- 14 (i) S. Bartolomeo
(ii) S. Croce
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
(iv) Flagellant
(v) 1454 processional list
(vi) "La chappella è nel primo chiostro", Hall, Renovation, 166.
- 15 (i) S. Bartolomeo
(ii) S. Maria Novella
(iii) 1349-50
(iv) Flagellant
(v) Fineschi, Memorie sopra il cimitero, xxviii-xxix
(vi) Met in the Cappella di S. Niccolò
- 16 (i) S. Bastiano
(ii) S. Jacopo :sopr'Arno
(iii) 1460
(iv) Boys' devotional
(v) Archivio compagnia di S. Jacopo, capitoli, f 4v.
(vi)

- 17 (i) S. Bastiano
(ii) S. Maria del Carmine
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1495
(iv) Devotional
(v) 1495 Decima: 67, f 266r
(vi)

- 18 (i) S. Bastiano
(ii) S. Pier Gattolino
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1495
(iv) Devotional
(v) 1495 Decima: 67, f 53v
(vi)

- 19 (i) S. Benedetto
(ii) S. Trinita
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
(iv) Flagellant
(v) 1454 processional list
(vi) Appears in 1495 Decima: 68, f 62r

- 20 (i) S. Benedetto Bianco
(ii) S. Maria Novella
(iii) Flagellant
(iv) 15.viii.1357 in S. Salvatore; in SMN between 26.xii.1393 and 17.vii.1394
(v) Del Migliore, "Zibaldone", f 81r; see 1495 Decima: 67, f 57v
(vi) Chapel: under the Sala del Concilio; they owned a monument "dentro alla porta della piazza vecchia sotto al lastrico" ("Sepoltuario", f 92r)

- 21 (i) S. Benedetto dei Neri
(ii) S. Salvatore di Camaldoli
(iii) 15.viii.1357
(iv) Flagellant
(v) Del Migliore, "Zibaldone", ff 81r-88v.
(vi) Splinter group calling itself 'S. Benedetto Bianco' moved to S. Maria Novella in 1394-95
- 22 (i) S. Bernardino
(ii) S. Croce
(iii) ?.iii.1451
(iv) Flagellant
(v) Del Migliore, "Zibaldone", f 4v.
(vi) Met in the cloister
- 23 (i) S. Bernardino
(ii) S. Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi
(iii) Late fifteenth century
(iv) Devotional
(v) Paatz, Die Kirchen von Florenz, IV, 101.
(vi)
- 24 (i) S. Bernardino e S. Caterina
(ii) S. Maria degli Alberighi
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1478
(iv) Devotional
(v) Catasto 989, f 96r
(vi)

- 25 (i) Bianchi
(ii) S. Michele Visdomini
(iii) 1399
(iv) Flagellant
(v) Paatz, Die Kirchen von Florenz, IV, 206-07, n.38
(vi)
- 26 (i) Bianchi
(ii) S. Orsola
(iii) 1399
(iv) Flagellant
(v) Paatz, Die Kirchen von Florenz, IV, 561
(vi)
- 27 (i) Bianchi
(ii) S. Pier Murrone
(iii) 1399
(iv) Flagellant
(v) Cap. CRS 537, prologue
(vi)
- 28 (i) Bianchi di S. Trinita
(ii) S. Trinita
(iii) 1399-1400
(iv) Flagellant
(v) Paatz, Die Kirchen von Florenz, V, 290, 355 n. 213
(vi)

- 29 (i) Bigallo o compagnia maggiore della Vergine Maria
 (ii) Oratory of the Bigallo, Piazza S. Giovanni
 (iii) 15.viii.1244
 (iv) Charitable
 (v) BNF, Magl. XXXVII, 300, f 127r
 (vi)
- 30 (i) S. Brigida
 (ii) SS. Appostoli
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) 1454 processional list
 (vi)
- 31 (i) S. Brigida
 (ii) S. Brigida
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
 (iv) Boys' devotional
 (v) 1454 processional list; Trexler, "Ritual in Florence", 208-09;
 Paatz, Die Kirchen von Florenz, I, 406-07.
 (vi)
- 32 (i) Buonomini di S. Martino
 (ii) S. Martino
 (iii) 1.ii.1442
 (iv) Charitable
 (v) First register of Entrata e Uscita: BNF Fondo Tordi 18, f 1r
 (vi) Own oratory in Piazza S. Martino

- 33 (i) Capanna
(ii) S. Croce
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1439
(iv) Devotional
(v) Paatz, Die Kirchen von Florenz, I, 610-11
(vi) In 1439 met in the "cappella nel primo chiostro..intitolato della Natività della Madonna"; Hall, Renovation, 164
- 34 (i) La carità
(ii) S. Basilio
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
(iv) Flagellant
(v) 1454 processional list
(vi)
- 35 (i) La carità
(ii) S. Maria Novella
(iii) l.viii.1379
(iv) ?
(v) Orlandi, Necrologio di S. Maria Novella, II, 11
(vi)
- 36 (i) S. Caterina detta del chiodo
(ii) S. Maria del Carmine
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1420
(iv) Devotional to unite Germans working in Florence
(v) Del Migliore, Firenze, 303; statutes in CRS Capitoli 608
(vi) Linked to S. Cornelio in S. Salvatore and S. Barbara in SS. Annunziata: Del Migliore, Firenze, 302-03

- 37 (i) S. Caterina da Siena delle donne
(ii) S. Maria Novella
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1365
(iv) Devotional company of women
(v) "Sepolfuario", f 28r
(vi) Chapel conceded to them in 1365: "sotto il ponale della chiesa alla cappella delli Alfani": "Sepoltuario", f 28r

- 38 (i) S. Cervagio
(ii) S. Cervagio alla Porta alla Croce
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1495
(iv) Devotional
(v) 1495 Decima: 72, f 76r
(vi)

- 39 (i) Ciottolo
(ii) Spedale di S. Piero Novello e dei Ridolfi
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1495
(iv) Devotional
(v) 1495 Decima: 70, f 70r
(vi)

- 40 (i) S. Concordia
(ii) S. Barnaba
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1429
(iv) Devotional
(v) Catasto 291, f 68v; Cap. CRS 194, f 11v; statutes dated 20.i.1437
(vi)

- 41 (i) S. Concordia
(ii) S. Maria del Carmine
(iii) Pre-1495
(iv) Devotional
(v) 1495 Decima: 70, f 70r
(vi)
- 42 (i) S. Conchordia
(ii) S. Orsola (?)
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1495
(iv) Devotional
(v) 1495 Decima: 67, f 80r: "nel popolo di S. Lorenzo, in Via di S. Ursola"
(vi) .
- 43 (i) S. Cornelio, del Chiodo
(ii) S. Salvatore di Camaldoli
(iii) 1420
(iv) Devotional company of German wool workers
(v) Del Migliore, Firenze, 302-03
(vi) Linked to compagnia di S. Barbara in SS. Annunziata and compagnia di S. Caterina in S. Maria del Carmine
- 44 (i) Corpus Cristi
(ii) S. Ambrogio
(iii) c.1370
(iv) Promotion of cult of Corpus Domini
(v) Giudici e notai 748, f 166v.
(vi) In 1371 the Arte dei Giudici e notai became the company's official protectors: E. Borsook, "Cults and Imagery at Sant'Ambrogio in Florence", Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz, XXV (1981), 154

- 45 (i) Corpus Cristi
(ii) S. Maria del Fiore
(iii) 1370s; suppressed on 17.viii.1391
(iv) Devotion to cult of Corpus Cristi
(v) Provv. Reg. 80, ff 69r-70r
(vi)
- 46 (i) Corpus Cristi
(ii) S. Maria Novella
(iii) c.1374; suppressed 17.viii.1391
(iv) Devotional
(v) Orlandi, Necrologio, I, xxx-xxxi; II, 11-12, 469-70;
Provv. Reg. 80, ff 69r-70r
(vi) 10.ii.1373 conceded right to meet in chapel of SS. Philip and
Jacob in cemetery
- 47 (i) S. Croce
(ii) S. Croce dei tessitori
(iii) 1405
(iv) Devotional company of silk-workers
(v) Cap. CRS 190, f 6
(vi) Members were "tessitori, tiratori e filatori di seta"
- 48 (i) Crocifisso
(ii) S. Maria del Carmine
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
(iv) Flagellant
(v) 1454 processional list
(vi) Also in 1495 Decima: 70, f 70r

- 49 (i) Crocifisso
 (ii) S. Maria Novella
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1495
 (iv) Devotional (?)
 (v) 1495 Decima: 70, f 70v
 (vi)
- 50 (i) Crocifisso dei Bianchi o S. Agostino
 (ii) S. Spirito
 (iii) 28.viii.1399
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) CRS 3.A.8.I, f 2v
 (vi) Appears in Catasto 420, f 10v and 1454 processional list
- 51 (i) S. Domenico detta del Bechello
 (ii) S. Maria Novella
 (iii) 16.vi.1399
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) Del Migliore "Zibaldone", f 72r
 (vi) Until 1465 met in the Cappella Ruccellai, after which built
 own oratory in Via della Scala: Del Migliore, "zibaldone",
 f 72r. See also Meersseman, Ordo fraternitatis, II, 698-753.
- 52 (i) Donna nostra di San Michele in Orto
 (ii) Or S. Michele
 (iii) 17.viii.1291
 (iv) Laudesi and charitable
 (v) 1294 statutes in S. La Sorsa, La compagnia d'Or S. Michele
 (Trani, 1902), 191
 (vi)

- 53 (i) Donne di S. Lorenzo (societas mulierum S. Laurentii)
(ii) S. Lorenzo
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1303
(iv) Devotional (?) company of women
(v) Davidsohn, Forschungen, IV, 440
(vi)
- 54 (i) SS. Eligio e Lorenzo detta dei manischalchi
(ii) S. Eligio e S. Lorenzo in sul canto della via delle ruote
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1396
(iv) Trade company of farriers who ran hospital of same name.
(v) Del Migliore "Zibaldone", f 57r; Cap. CRS 595 for 1333-1726
(but alluvinato)
(vi) See also 1495 Decima: 67, f 90v. Built hospital in 1435:
Passerini, Storia, 106.
- 55 (i) S. Eustachio
(ii) S. Ambrogio
(iii) Early fourteenth century (?)
(iv) Laudesi
(v) E. Cecconi, Laudi di una compagnia fiorentina del secolo XIV (Florence, 1870), ix.
(vi)
- 56 (i) S. Felicita
(ii) S. Maria Sopr'Arno
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
(iv) Flagellant
(v) 1454 processional list
(vi)

- 57 (i) S. Filippo
(ii) Spedale del Porcellana
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1357
(iv) Flagellant
(v) Ref. in a will recorded in BL MS 17, 310, f 27r, and
Conv. R.S. 102.294, f 100r
(vi)
- 58 (i) S. Francesco
(ii) S. Croce
(iii) 1400
(iv) Flagellant
(v) Conv.R.S. 92.390, f 1r; 1454 processional list
(vi) In 1439 met in "La chapella di sopra in detta schuola è
intitolata in S. Francesco": Hall, Renovation, 164.
- 59 (i) S. Frediano detta "la Bruciata"
(ii) S. Frediano
(iii) l.i.1324
(iv) Laudesi and charitable
(v) 1324 statutes: BNF, Palatino 154, f 1r
(vi)
- 60 (i) Gesù e della Croce
(ii) S. Croce
(iii) 6.x.1332
(iv) Flagellant
(v) F. Moisé, S. Croce (Florence, 1845), 421-22; 1454
processional list
(vi) "La chappela sotto le volte in verso la tramontana è
intitolata nella Croce", Hall, Renovation, 165-66.

- 61 (i) Gesù Pellegrino or Misericordia del Salvatore, or
S. Simone e S. Giuda
(ii) S. Maria Novella
(iii) 2.i.1334
(iv) Flagellant
(v) 1354 statutes in Capitoli CRS 867 (flooded), in I
Capitoli della compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino, ed. P. Ferrato
(Padova, 1871) (Nozze Carlotti-Cittadella Vigodorzere),
ix.
(vi) Met in chapel of S. Simone e S. Taddeo
- 62 (i) S. Gilio e Vergine e laude della Vergine Maria, detta
la crocetta
(ii) S. Egidio
(iii) 29.v.1278
(iv) Laudesi
(v) Statutes in Monti, Le confraternite, II, 155; Del Migliore,
"Zibaldone", f 66r.
(vi)
- 63 (i) S. Giorgio
(ii) S. Giorgio, sulla Costa di S. Giorgio
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1495
(iv) Devotional (?)
(v) 1495 Decima: 70, f 122v
(vi)
- 64 (i) S. Giovanni Battista
(ii) S. Giovanni tra le arcore
(iii) 1316
(iv) Flagellant
(v) Del Migliore, "Zibaldone", f 55r; 1454 processional list
(vi)

- 65 (i) S. Giovanni Battista
(ii) S. Pier Buonconsiglio
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1319
(iv) Devotional (?)
(v) Del Migliore, "Zibaldone", f 53r.
(vi)
- 66 (i) S. Giovanni Battista Decollato
(ii) Casa di Misericordia del Beato M.S. Giovanni Battista
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1317
(iv) Ran hospital for Porters of Norcia
(v) See Capitoli della compagnia dei Portatori, o S. Giovanni Decollato, ed. P. Fanfani (Bologna, 1858)
(vi)
- 67 (i) S. Giovanni Battista detto lo scalzo
(ii) S. Pier Murrone (now S. Giovannino dei Cavalieri)
(iii) 1376
(iv) Flagellant
(v) BRF, Ricc. MS. 2535, f lv; 1454 processional list
(vi) 1376: began in S. Jacopo in Campo Corbolino ; 1386-1407: moved to garden of S. Pier del Murrone; 1487 built oratory which exists today at 69-71 Via Cavour: Paatz, Die Kirchen von Florenz, V, 74-89.
- 68 (i) S. Giovanni Battista e S. Crispino
(ii) S. Giovanni e S. Crispino, near Porta a S. Pier Gattolino
(iii) Late fourteenth century
(iv) "All'interno della corporazione dei calzalai...per il soccorso dei compagni di lavoro bisognosi"
(v) Davidsohn, Storia, VI, 215; Papi, "Confraternite ed ordini mendicanti", 727 n.8
(vi)

- 69 (i) S. Giovanni Evangelista
(ii) Trinita Vecchia
(iii) c. 1427
(iv) Boys' devotional
(v) 1427 archiepiscopal approbation S. Orlandi, S. Antonino
arcivescovo di Firenze (Florence, 1959), II, 211, n.43.
(vi)
- 70 (i) S. Giovannuzo
(ii) Not known
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1495
(iv) Devotional (?)
(v) 1495 Decima: 70, f 123r
(vi)
- 71 (i) S. Giovanni Gualberto detto il Zampillo
(ii) S. Trinita
(iii) Early fourteenth century (?)
(iv) Flagellant
(v) Hatfield, "The compagnia de'Magi", 126-27
(vi) In c.1478 it moved to S. Marco and merged with the Magi
- 72 (i) S. Girolomo detta la buca
(ii) S. Giorgio, Costa di S. Giorgio
(iii) 1441
(iv) Flagellant: "della notte"
(v) Cap. CRS 195, f 1r, 1454 processional list
(vi)

- 73 (i) Hosso
 (ii) S. Maria Nuova
 (iii) pre-1495
 (iv) Devotional (?)
 (v) 1495 Decima: 67, f 299v
 (vi)
- 74 (i) S. Ignatio
 (ii) S. Maria Novella
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) 1454 processional list
 (vi)
- 75 (i) SS. Innocenti
 (ii) S. Maria Novella
 (iii) 1389 in S.M .Maggiore; 1415 transferred to S. Maria Novella
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) Cap. CRS 719, ff 3r-v
 (vi) Met in the Chapel dei Popoleschi, "sotto le volte" 24.i.1456
 moved to the Ubriachi chapel in the Cappella Maggiore
- 76 (i) S. Jacopo de' cimatori
 (ii) Not known
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
 (iv) Devotional company of cimatori
 (v) Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood, 65
 (vi)

- 77 (i) S. Jacopo detta del Nicchio
 (ii) SS. Annunziata
 (iii) 1490
 (iv) Devotional
 (v) Del Migliore, "Zibaldone", f 55r
 (vi)
- 78 (i) S. Jacopo detta della notte
 (ii) S. Jacopo sopr'Arno
 (iii) c.1300
 (iv) Devotional; c.1444 becomes a flagellant company
 (v) Archivio della compagnia di S. Jacopo, capitoli, ff 4r-v
 (vi)
- 79 (i) SS. Jacopo, Pancrazio e Girolomo
 (ii) S. Pancrazio
 (iii) 1469 granted place to meet by Prior
 (iv) Devotional
 (v) Del Migliore, "Zibaldone", f 23r. Met "sotto le volte di
 S. Pancrazio"
 (vi)
- 80 (i) S. Leo
 (ii) S. Marco (?)
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1441
 (iv) Charitable company of scissor and knife makers.
 (v) Not. Antecos. T. 278 (1434-55), under 26.iv.1449
 (vi) To support poor members of trade

- 81 (i) S. Leonardo
 (ii) S. Salvatore di Camaldoli
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) 1454 processional list
 (vi) Met "dirimpetto a Camaldoli"
- 82 (i) S. Leonardo
 (ii) Stinche
 (iii) 1335
 (iv) Charitable: spiritual and corporal assistance to prisoners
 (v) Passerini, Storia, 497
 (vi)
- 83 (i) S. Lorenzo in Palco
 (ii) S. Maria Novella
 (iii) 1279
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) Statutes of 1365: BLF, Ashburnham 979 f 2r
 (vi) L'altare ultimo della nave di verso la piazza vecchia..è
 della compagnia.. che si raguna nel orto del convento.
 Prima i fratelli si sepillavano nel primo chiostro"
 ("Sepoltuario", ff 24v-25r)
- 84 (i) S. Lorenzo in Piano detta dei Bianchi
 (ii) Ospedale degli Innocenti
 (iii) 1399 in S. Lorenzino near SS. Annunziata; 1447-54 transferred
 to Innocenti
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) Cap. CRS 537, prologue; 1454 processional list; Del
 Migliore, "Zibaldone", 47r; BRF, MS Moreniana 191, ff 1r-12v
 (vi)

- 85 (i) S. Luca
 (ii) S. Maria Nuova
 (iii) 17.x.1349 (?)
 (iv) Devotional confraternity of painters
 (v) Accademia del disegno 1, f 1r
 (vi)
- 86 (i) S. Lucia detta dei Bianchi
 (ii) S. Lucia sul Prato
 (iii) 1399
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) Cap. CRS 537, prologue
 (vi) Owned one of the crucifixes carried by the Bianchi
 in 1399
- 87 (i) Magi
 (ii) S. Marco
 (iii) Pre-1417
 (iv) Mounted sacre rappresentazioni and c.1483 became a
 flagellant company
 (v) Hatfield, "The compagnia de' Magi", 109, 125
 (vi)
- 88 (i) S. Marco
 (ii) S. Marco
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1317
 (iv) Devotional company of lanaioli
 (v) N. Rodolico, I Ciompi (Florence, 1971 ed.), 25
 (vi)

- 89 (i) S. Marco dei Lucchesi; Ceppo dei tessitori
(ii) S. Marco
(iii) Pre-1320
(iv) Company of Lucchese silk weavers
(v) Davidsohn, Storia, VI, 158
(vi) Met in room under the sacristy; 1455 moved to S. Maria Nuova. Built hospital in 1481: I.del Badia, La compagnia dei tessitori di drappi e la sua loggia (Florence, 1904), 5
- 90 (i) S. Maria
(ii) S. Romolo
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1441
(iv) Devotional
(v) Bigallo 1677, f 257v
(vi)
- 91 (i) S. Maria in S. Gallo
(ii) Via S. Gallo
(iii) Pre-c.1460
(iv) Devotional (?)
(v) Conv.R.S. 102.308, f 14Or
(vi)
- 92 (i) S. Maria Assunta; later "dei battilani"
(ii) S. Maria dei Candeli (also S. Maria del Canto a Monteloro)
(iii) 1320
(iv) Probably laudesi; by mid-sixteenth century described as "compagnia di stendardo"
(v) Del Migliore, "Zibaldone", f 60r; Passerini, Storia, 108-11
(vi) 1480 founded hospital to look after old and sick members of their trade

- 93 (i) S. Maria Chiarito, detta dei Bianchi
 (ii) Convento dei Chiarito, Via S. Gallo
 (iii) 1399
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) Richa, Notizie istoriche, V, 207
 (vi) On church see Paatz, Die Kirchen von Florenz, I, 462-68
- 94 (i) S. Maria della Croce al Tempio, detta dei Neri o di
 S. Giovanni Battista
 (ii) S. Giuseppe
 (iii) 25.iii.1347
 (iv) Founded as devotional company; 1360 founded hospital;
 1423 began to accompany condemned criminals to gallows
 (v) 1488 statutes: BNF, Magl.VIII.1500, f 55r; Passerini,
 Storia, 482-83
 (vi)
- 95 (i) S. Maria del Giglio e S. Giuseppe
 (ii) S. Giuseppe
 (iii) 1405
 (iv) Connected to the Arte dei Caligai e conciatori
 (v) Richa, Notizie istoriche, II, 359; S. Fioretti, Storia
 della chiesa prioria di S. Maria del Giglio (Florence,
 1855), 63-65
 (vi)
- 96 (i) S. Maria delle laudi e di S. Ambrogio
 (ii) S. Ambrogio
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1466
 (iv) Laudesi
 (v) Bigallo 1677, f 361r; also in 1495 Decima:70, f 13r
 (vi)

- 97 (i) S. Maria delle laude e di S. Lorenzo
(ii) S. Lorenzo
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1329; probably founded in late thirteenth century
(iv) Laudesi
(v) Richa, Notizie istoriche, V, 91; A. Cianfogni, Memorie istoriche dell'Ambrosiana basilica di San Lorenzo (Florence, 1804-17), I, 178, 220-21
(vi) Probably the compagnia della chiesa di S. Lorenzo cited in Bigallo 1667, f 183v under 6.iv.1446
- 98 (i) S. Maria delle laude e di S. Maria Maggiore
(ii) S. Maria Maggiore
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1357; probably late thirteenth century
(iv) Laudesi
(v) CRS 2170.4, f 6v: will of Bartolo Bocciardi of 7.iii.1357
(vi) Cf 1495 Decima: 72, f 48v
- 99 (i) S. Maria delle laude e di S. Marco
(ii) S. Marco
(iii) c.1250
(iv) Laudesi
(v) Richa, Notizie istoriche, VII, 113; 329-30
(vi)
- 100 (i) S. Maria delle laude e di S. Michele Berteldi
(ii) S. Michele Berteldi (now known as SS. Michele e Gaetano)
(iii) Thirteenth century (?)
(iv) Laudesi
(v) Manni, "Zibaldone di notizie patrie", Bibl. Moreniana 184 (Bigazzi), f 389r
(vi)

- 101 (i) S. Maria delle laude
(ii) S. Pier Scheraggio
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1388; probably late Duecento
(iv) Laudesi
(v) Provv. Reg. 75, f 181r
(vi) Possibly the same as the "compagnia della Vergine Maria annunziata" in 1495 Decima: 69, f 290r
- 102 (i) S. Maria delle laude e S. Spirito, detta del Piccione
(ii) S. Spirito
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1329; probably late thirteenth century
(iv) Laudesi
(v) Diplomatico di S. Maria Novella, 30.iii.1329
(vi) Appears in 1495 Decima: 70, f 383r
- 103 (i) S. Maria delle laude (Sotietas S. Trinitatis)
(ii) S. Trinita
(iii) Earliest ref.: 15.iv.1300
(iv) Laudesi
(v) Davidsohn, Forschungen, IV, 440
(vi) Mentioned in Provv. Reg. 72, ff 189r-v: 18.xii.1383
- 104 (i) S. Maria Maddalena
(ii) Via S. Gallo
(iii) Pre-1495
(iv) Devotional (?)
(v) 1495 Decima: 67, f 265v
(vi)

- 105 (i) S. Maria Maddalena
 (ii) S. Croce
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1449
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) Del Migliore, "Zibaldone", f 24r; 1454 processional list
 (vi)
- 106 (i) S. Maria della Neve
 (ii) S. Ambrogio
 (iii) 23.v.1445
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) Cap. CRS 606, f 38r
 (vi) Statutes approved by S. Antonino in 1447: *ibid.*, f 50v
- 107 (i) S. Maria della Pietà e di S. Jeronimo
 (ii) Ospedale di S. Matteo
 (iii) 25.iv.1410 in S. Jeronimo, Fiesole; 1413 to S. Matteo
 (iv) Flagellant: "della notte"
 (v) Archivio della compagnia di S. Jeronimo, "Memorie di
 nostra compagnia", 1
 (vi)
- 108 (i) S. Maria del Popolo
 (ii) S. Maria del Carmine
 (iii) 6.v.1460
 (iv) Devotional company of women
 (v) Conv.R.S. 113.19, f 15v; quoted in A. Mohlo, "The Brancacci
 Chapel", *JWCI*, XL (1977), 83
 (vi) Met in the Brancacci Chapel and was composed of about 80
 "donne delle...migliore chase e da bene di Firenze"

- 109 (i) S. Maria del Suffragio, detta dei Bianchi
 (ii) S. Egidio
 (iii) 1399
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) Santoni, Notizie storiche, 17
 (vi)
- 110 (i) SS. Martiri
 (ii) S. Salvatore di Camaldoli
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) 1454 flagellant processional list
 (vi) Appears in 1495 Decima: 68, f 276r
- 111 (i) S. Matteo
 (ii) S. Maria Novella
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1473
 (iv) Laudesi or di stendardo
 (v) Fineschi, Memorie, xxiii
 (vi) Met from 1473 in the Chiostro Verde "nel capitolo
 de' Guidalotti, detta del'Orco": Fineschi, Memorie, xxiii
- 112 (i) S. Matteo
 (ii) S. Spirito
 (iii) c.1396
 (iv) Boys' devotional
 (v) Prov. Reg. 85, ff 247r-248r: petition of 8.xii.1396
 (vi)

- 113 (i) S. Michele
 (ii) S. Maria del Fiore
 (iii) c.1453
 (iv) Devotional
 (v) 1453 statutes: BLF 1660
 (vi)
- 114 (i) S. Michele Arcangelo delle Paci e de' Bianchi
 (ii) S. Ambrogio
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1415
 (iv) Flagellant, charitable
 (v) Inscription, corner above oratory, Piazza S. Ambrogio:
 "A dì 18 gennaio 1414 s'edifichò-restaurata il 1559-
 pauperos societatis S. Michele delle pace"
 (vi)
- 115 (i) S. Michele Arcangelo
 (ii) SS. Annunziata
 (iii) c.1420
 (iv) Boys' devotional
 (v) Approbation of statutes of 23.xi.1420: Not.Antecos.
 S 672 (1417-21), at date
 (vi)
- 116 (i) S. Michele Vicedomini (societas S. Michelis Vicedominis)
 (ii) S. Michele Vicedomini
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1316
 (iv) Devotional (?)
 (v) Davidsohn, Forschungen, IV, 440
 (vi)

- 117 (i) Misericordia
(ii) Oratory of the Misericordia
(iii) 1244
(iv) Charitable
(v) Archivio della compagnia della Misericordia MS 359, f 1r
(vi)
- 118 (i) Natività
(ii) Ognissanti
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
(iv) Flagellant
(v) 1454 processional list
(vi) Possibly owned the oratory to the right of the church, where one can still see flagellants represented in the tympanum above the door
- 119 (i) S. Niccolò di Bari
(ii) S. Maria del Carmine
(iii) 1334
(iv) Flagellant
(v) "Registro dei benefattori e nomi di confratelli", from 1334: CRS 1538 (alluvinato); 1454 processional list
(vi)
- 120 (i) S. Niccolò detta del Ceppo
(ii) Ibid.
(iii) 1417
(iv) Boys' devotional
(v) Del Migliore, "Zibaldone", ff 25r-v
(vi) "Fecero un'oratorio nel popolo di S. Jacopo tra Fossi, appresso al monastero delle poverine detto il ceppo."

- 121 (i) S. Niccolò
(ii) S. Maria Novella
(iii) 1349-50
(iv) Flagellant
(v) Fineschi, Memorie, xxviii-xxix
(vi) Met in the cappella di S. Niccolò
- 122 (i) S. Niccolò
(ii) S. Niccolò oltr'Arno
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
(iv) Flagellant
(v) 1454 processional list
(vi)
- 123 (i) S. Niccolò da Tolentino
(ii) S. Barnaba
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
(iv) Flagellant
(v) 1454 processional list; Del Migliore, "Zibaldone", f 60v
(vi)
- 124 (i) Nostra Donna e S. Pier Gattolino
(ii) S. Pier Gattolino
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1427 Catasto
(iv) Laudesi (?)
(v) Catasto: 293, f 29v
(vi)

- 125
- (i) S. Onofrio (o Nofrio) dell'arte de' tintori
 - (ii) S. Onofrio, chapel of, Via de' Malcontenti (?)
 - (iii) 1280
 - (iv) Devotional company of tintori
 - (v) Passerini, Storia, 99; Paatz, Die Kirchen von Florenz, IV, 458
 - (vi) The company began to build a hospital in 1339: Passerini, Storia, 99
- 126
- (i) S. Paolo
 - (ii) Trinita Vecchia
 - (iii) ?.xi.1434
 - (iv) Flagellant, "dalla notte"
 - (v) CRS 1579. I, f 50v
 - (vi) Founded in the Badia Fiorentina in 1434, but bought the Trinita Vecchia on 28.viii.1438: Ibid., f 50r
- 127
- (i) S. Paolo dei sarti
 - (ii) ?
 - (iii) 1435
 - (iv) Del Migliore, "Zibaldone", ff 31r-v
 - (v) Built an oratory and hospital
 - (vi)
- 128
- (i) S. Pier Gattolino
 - (ii) S. Pier Gattolino
 - (iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
 - (iv) Flagellant
 - (v) 1454 processional list
 - (vi)

- 129 (i) S. Pier Maggiore
 (ii) S. Pier Maggiore
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1330
 (iv) Devotional (?)
 (v) D.M. Manni, "Zibaldone", BRF, MS Moreniana 184
 (Bigazzi), f 389r
 (vi)
- 130 (i) S. Pier Martire e laude della Vergine Maria
 (ii) S. Maria Novella
 (iii) 1244-45
 (iv) Laudesi
 (v) Orlandi, "Il VII centenario della predicazione di S. Pier
 Martire a Firenze, 1245-1945", Memorie Domenicane, LXIII,
 N.S. XXI (1946), 86
 (vi)
- 131 (i) Purificazione della Madonna e S. Zanobi
 (ii) S. Marco
 (iii) By 8.x.1427 in SS. Annunziata; 1440 moved to S. Marco
 (iv) Boys' devotional
 (v) Statutes of 29.vi.1444: BNF Magl. viii.1500.II; Del
 Migliore, "Zibaldone", f 17r
 (vi)
- 132 (i) Purità, o Madonna detta della Pura
 (ii) S. Maria Novella
 (iii) 1473-1474
 (iv) Boys' company to promote cult of miraculous picture
 of Madonna
 (v) S. Orlandi, "La capella e la compagnia della Purità in
 S. Maria Novella di Firenze", Memorie Domenicane, LXXV,
 N.S. XXX, II-III (1958), 160, 172
 (vi) 1474-77 chapel constructed around the Madonna, above the
 tomb on side of church facing Piazza Vecchia (Ibid.,
 168-169)

- 133 (i) Raccomandati di S. Maria
(ii) S. Egidio
(iii) C.1278
(iv) Flagellant (?)
(v) Monti, Le confraternite, II, 156-57
(vi)
- 134 (i) Resurrezione del nostro Gesù Cristo o di S. Basilio
(ii) S. Basilio
(iii) 26.vi.1485
(iv) Devotional; described by Trexler as a "festive group"
(Public Life, 406)
(v) Cap. CRS 100, f 2r
(vi)
- 135 (i) S. Rocco
(ii) Ospedale di S. Rocco, presso alla Porta di S. Gallo
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1495
(iv) Devotional (?)
(v) 1495 Decima: 67, f 337r
(vi)
- 136 (i) Santi quattro
(ii) S. Maria del Fiore
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1390
(iv) Devotional
(v) Carte Stroziane, ser. II, 78, f 67r
(vi)

- 137 (i) S. Sebastiano e delle laude della Vergine Maria e di S. Filippo, e di S. Gherardo
(ii) SS. Annunziata
(iii) 8.ix.1263
(iv) Laudesi
(v) Cap. CRS 6, f 3v
(vi) "posta dietro alla chiesa": "Fondazione e storia della compagnia di S. Sebastiano", BRF, Moreniana 351, f 1r
- 138 (i) S. Sebastiano de' Genovesi
(ii) S. Frediano
(iii) 10.vii.1474
(iv) Trade devotional company for Genoese in Florence
(v) 1474 statutes: BRF MS Ricc. 1685, f 5v
(vi) Had moved to Via di S. Salvatore by time of 1495 Decima: 70, f 47v
- 139 (i) S. Sebastiano
(ii) S. Michele Visdomini
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
(iv) Flagellant
(v) 1454 processional list
(vi) Met under the church: Del Migliore, "Zibaldone", f 39r; Cf Decima 67, f 53v
- 140 (i) S. Silvestro Laudesi della Nostra Donna
(ii) S. Felice in Piazza
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1277
(iv) Devotional
(v) Davidsohn, Forschungen, IV, 431; compagnia della Nostra Donna in 1431 (Catasto 425, f 10r)
(vi)

- 141 (i) S. Spirito
(ii) S. Basilio
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1495
(iv) Devotional
(v) 1495 Decima: 70, f 374r
(vi)
- 142 (i) S. Spirito
(ii) S. Marco
(iii) Earliest ref.: 1439
(iv) Flagellant
(v) Bigallo 1677, f 81r, under l.v.1439
(vi)
- 143 (i) Spirito Santo
(ii) S. Maria Novella
(iii) 1439
(iv) Flagellant
(v) Fineschi, Memorie, xxii
(vi) Appears in 1454 processional list
- 144 (i) Tavolaccini
(ii) S. Clemente
(iii) 1427
(iv) Charitable
(v) Paatz, Die Kirchen von Florenz, I, 470; 1495 Decima: 67, f 80v; Richa, Notizie istoriche, V, 242.
(vi) Ran hospital for members of own trade

- 145 (i) S. Tommaso Aquino
 (ii) S. Maria Novella
 (iii) 1390
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) Orlandi, Necrologio di S. Maria Novella, II, 543
 (vi)
- 146 (i) S. Trinita
 (ii) S. Trinita
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1454
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) 1454 processional list
 (vi)
- 147 (i) S. Ursule
 (ii) S. Orsola (?)
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1316
 (iv) Devotional (?)
 (v) Davidsohn, Forschungen, IV, 440
 (vi)
- 148 (i) Vergine Maria delle laude di S. Croce
 (ii) S. Croce
 (iii) 1244
 (iv) Laudesi
 (v) 1470 statutes: BRF Ricc. MS 2535, f 20r; Decima 67, f 82v
 (vi) 1439 meeting-place: "La chapella del canto rimpetto alla
 porta della sagrestia", Hall, Renovation, 157; also
 in the cappella dei Bardi di Vernio-Niccolini: Paatz,
 Die Kirchen von Florenz, I, 604

- 149 (i) Vergine Maria e S. Caterina
 (ii) S. Lorenzo
 (iii) 1441
 (iv) Devotional company of German shoemakers
 (v) Bigallo 1677, f 25Or; Davidsohn, Storia, VI, 215
 (vi) Probably owned a house in Via S. Gallo: Decima 67, f 89v
- 150 (i) Vergine Maria
 (ii) S. Maria Sopr'Arno
 (iii) Late fifteenth century
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) Late fifteenth-century statutes: BRF, Ricc. MS 2382
 (undated)
 (vi)
- 151 (i) Vergine Maria or laudesi di S. Martino
 (ii) S. Martino della Scala
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1447
 (iv) Devotional
 (v) 1447 Catasto 686, f 22v; Decima 70, f 237v
 (vi)
- 152 (i) Vergine Maria
 (ii) Ognissanti
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1277
 (iv) Laudesi
 (v) D.M. Manni, Osservazioni istoriche sopra i sigilli antichi (Florence, 1739), xix, 127
 (vi)

- 153 (i) S. Vincenzo Ferreri
 (ii) S. Maria Novella
 (iii) 1454-55
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) Orlandi, Necrologio di S. Maria Novella, II, 289, 349
 (vi) Appeared in 1454 processional list
- 154 (i) Visitazione di Maria Vergine e S. Elisabetta
 (ii) Oratorio di S. Michele (Ponte S. Trinita?)
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1464
 (iv) Devotional (?)
 (v) CRS 2093B: records of affari diversi of company from 1462
 (vi)
- 155 (i) S. Zanobi o di S. Reparata, detta dei laudesi
 (ii) S. Maria del Fiore
 (iii) 23.vi.1281
 (iv) Laudesi
 (v) 1324 statutes: CRS 2170.1, f 3r
 (vi) The company was the patron of the following chapels in
 S. Maria del Fiore: S. Giovanni Battista, S. Maria e
 S. Zanobi, SS. Annunziata: Del Migliore, "Zibaldone",
 f 9r
- 156 (i) S. Zanobi
 (ii) S. Maria Novella
 (iii) Earliest ref.: 1363; conceded a place to meet in that year
 (iv) Flagellant
 (v) Orlandi, Necrologio di S. Maria Novella, I, xxx, 608;
 II, 446-67
 (vi)

APPENDIX 2(a) Florentine confraternities authorised to appear in
the procession on 24 June 1454

Regole di frati come vanno a processione secondo la nota del
vescovo Antonino come mi dette Baccio Falsommonstra. (1)

Compagnie de' fanciulli

Compagnia di S. Brigida
S. Jacopo
S. Bernardino
S. Giorgio
S. Giovanni Vangelista
S. Marco
Della Scala

Compagnie di disciplina

Quarter of S. Spirito

S. Niccolò Oltr'Arno
S. Felicita in S. Maria sopr'Arno
S. Girolamo in decto luogo
L'Agnolo Raffaello in S. Spirito
Crocifisso in S. Spirito
S. Brigida in Abogoli
S. Piero Gattolini in decta chiesa
S. Niccolò nel Carmine
Crocifisso nel Carmine
Compagnia del Leonardo (?) dirimpetto a Camaldoli
De' martiri in Camaldoli

Quarter of S. Croce

Del Giesù in S. Croce
S. Bartolomeo in S. Croce
La Maddalena in S. Croce
S. Bernardino in S. Croce
S. Francesco in S. Croce
S. Michele de' Bianchi in S. Ambrogio
S. Maria della Neve in decto luogo

Quarter of S. Maria Novella

S. Benedetto in S. Trinita
La Trinita in S. Trinita
La Natività in Ognissanti

S. Zanobi in S. Maria Novella
S. Ignatio in S. Maria Novella
S. Lorenzo in S. Maria Novella
S. Vincentio in S. Maria Novella
Spirito Santo in S. Maria Novella
S. Domenico in S. Maria Novella
S. Benedetto in S. Maria Novella
El pellegrino in S. Maria Novella

Quarter of S. Giovanni

S. Giovanni in S. Jacopo in (Campo) Corbolini
S. Niccolò da Tolentino in S. Barnaba
La carità negli Armini
S. Giovanni Scalzo dietro a S. Marco
S. Bastiano dietro a Servi
L'Annunziata nelli Innocenti
S. Lorenzo nelli Innocenti
S. Bastiano a S. Michele Visdomini

(1) ASF, Signoria e Balìa, Carte di Corredo 45, f 18v. Copy
in B.L. Addit. MS. 28, 178, ff 170v-171r.

APPENDIX 2(b)

Benedetto 'Dei's list of flagellant companies in Florence in 1466

La compagnia della Crocetta colonna
Del Pellegrino insalata di più erbe
Dello Spirito Santo gramazzosoni
Di S. Benedetto fa lume qua
Di S. Domenico sta in sul noce
Del Martilliccio in S. Croce
Dell' Gesù in S. Croce sua residenza
Di S. Vincenzio a S. Maria Novella
Dell' Agnolo Rafaello a S. Spirito
Della Maddalena a S. Maria in Campo
Del Crocifisso a S. Spirito sta
Di S. Bernardino a S. Croce
Di S. Brigida alla strada a S. Piero
De tre chiovi di Christo stanno a' Ricci
Del Ciottolo fa S. Maria Sopr'Arno
Di S. Niccolò a S. Maria del Carmine
Di S. Zanobi a S. Maria Novella
Del Zampillino a S. Trinita
Della Natività a S. Croce
De' matori a Chamaldoli istanno
Della fiamma a S. Stefano
Di S. Salvestro a S. Maria Novella
La compagnia della Nunziata a S. Felice in Piazza
Del Pippione grosso a S. Spirito
Di S. Giovanni Battista a Servi stanno
Dell'Ascensione al Carmine
Di S. Basilio al Canto alle Macine
Di S. Antonio da Padova a S. Croce
Del Tempio a Tagliagozo e Piccardia
Del Barbagianni a S. Jacopo a' Ridolfi

Di S. Giovanni Scalzo a S. Matteo
Della Cornacchia overo dire Galza
Della Schiaviata fa S. Croce

Source: Benedetto Dei "Ricordanze": BNR, Moreni 103, ff 63r-v.

APPENDIX 3

Confraternities listed in the Florentine census of 1524-27

Quartieri di S. Maria Novella

<u>Compagnie sono in S. Maria Novella e Piazza</u>	<u>No. of Members</u>
La compagnia di S. Zanobi di disciplina	200
La compagnia di S. Lorenzo di disciplina	100
La compagnia di S. Vincentio di disciplina	250
La compagnia dello Spirito Sancto di disciplina	250
La compagnia di S. Domenico di disciplina	300
La compagnia di S. Benedecto bianco di disciplina	200
La compagnia di S. Benedecto bigio di disciplina	100
La compagnia de' Nocenti di stendardo	300
La compagnia di S. Thomaso d'Aquino non si rauna persona	-
La compagnia della charità di disciplina	50
La compagnia di S. Innatio di disciplina	400
La compagnia del Pellegrino di disciplina	200
La compagnia della Purità di disciplina	100
La compagnia delli Spagnoli di stendardo	25
La compagnia del Diamante; questa l'ordinò el Signor'	-
Giuliano non si raunano et non si ricorda	-
 Somma di tutte le decte Compagnie sono in tutto	 15
Somma di tutte le persone di dette compagnie sono in tutto persone	2475

Piazza di S. Trinita

No. of
Members

In detta chiesa [sono] due compagnie:

La prima è la compagnia del Zampillo	100
La compagnia di S. Giovanni Gualberto	300

Number of companies in quarter	<u>17</u>
Number of members	<u>3275</u>

Quartieri di S. Spirito

Qui da pie saranno tucte le compagnie del quartiere di S. Spirito
Nella chiesa propria di S. Spirito sono gli infrascritti viz.:

La compagnia di S. Chaterina della Magna	40
La compagnia di S. Nicholaio decto il Capassone di disciplina	500
La compagnia di S. Alberto de' fanciugli	100
La compagnia di S. Agnese di stendardo	500
La compagnia di S. Alberto di disciplina	70
La compagnia di S. Bastiano decto il Poponcino di stendardo	100
La compagnia del crocifixo di disciplina	200
La compagnia del Agnolo Raffaello di disciplina	400
La compagnia dei Bianchi del crucifixo di disciplina	80
La compagnia di S. Niccholò di Tarantino di disciplina	80
La compagnia del Pippione di stendardo	100

In S. Felice in Piazza sonvi tucte le infrascripte compagnie:

La compagnia di S. Rocho di stendardo	200
La compagnia dell' Orciuolo di standardo	500

In la chiesa di S. Piero Gattolini

La compagnia di Nostra Donna titolata in S. Piero Gattolini, sopranome la Gatta	300
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<u>In sulla Costa di S. Giorgio</u>	<u>No. of Members</u>
La compagnia del Fiasco titulata in S. Felicità di disciplina	200
La compagnia de' fanciugli titulata S. Antonio da Padova raunasi in S. Girolimo di nocte	300
La compagnia de' fanciugli in decto luogo	100
La compagnia di S. Giorgio del drago di stendardo	150
 <u>In S. Maria Sopr'Arno</u>	
La compagnia del Ciottolo	100
La compagnia della Stracciata	120
 <u>In S. Niccolò di la da Arno</u>	
La compagnia de' Poverino di disciplina	300
La compagnia intitulata in S. Niccolò di stendardo	150
 <u>In S. Jacopo Sopr'Arno</u>	
La compagnia intitulata in S. Bastiano de' fanciugli	200
La compagnia del Pentolino di disciplina	200
 <u>In S. Friano</u>	
La compagnia della Bruxiatta di stendardo	250
La compagnia de' Genovesi titulata in S. Bastiano	300
 <u>In la chiesa di Camaldoli di fuori</u>	
La compagnia de' Martiri di disciplina	400
La compagnia del Chiovo di disciplina	300
La compagnia di stendardo di S. Corino della magna bassa	200
La compagnia della pace di stendardo	300
La compagnia della cappella del Corso	200
 <u>In S. Giovanni di S. Friano</u>	
La compagnia de' Tessitori di stendardo	500
La compagnia di S. Giovanni di stendardo dicollato	150

<u>Fuori la Porta a S. Friano</u>	<u>No. of Members</u>
La compagnia del Corpus Domini in S. Maria in Verzaia	200
La compagnia dell'Assumptione di Nostra Donna in decta chiesa	100
La compagnia di S. Zanobi di stendardo	80
La compagnia de' Montisegli titulata in S. Francesco in decta chiesa	100
 <u>A Monte Uliveto</u>	
La compagnia del Paccio titulata in Monte Uliveto	100
 <u>Fuori la Porta a S. Piero Gattolini</u>	
La compagnia di S. Giovanni Vangelista	100
La compagnia di S. Brigida di disciplina	350
La compagnia di S. Lionardo di stendardo	100
 <u>In La chiesa di S. Miniato</u>	
La compagnia di S. Miniato di disciplina	200
 Number of companies in quarter:	42
Number of members:	9140
 <u>Quartieri di S. Croce</u>	
 <u>La Chiesa di S. Croce</u>	
La prima è la compagnia del Giesù	300
La compagnia della Magdalena	400
La compagnia del Martellaccio di stendardo	300
La compagnia di S. Bartolomeo di stendardo	500
La compagnia de' piaceri di stendardo	100
La compagnia di S. Francesco di stendardo	150
La compagnia di S. Antonio da Padova	200
La compagnia di S. Michele	100

Somma di tucte le compagnie sono in decta chiesa sono	8
Somma di tucte le persone sono in decte compagnie sono	2050

<u>Da S. Giuseppe</u>	<u>No. of Members</u>
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La crocifixo cioè dei Neri del Tempio	50
Chiesa e compagnia di S. Giuseppe	305

Chiesa di S. Maria Nuova

Compagnia del piccioncino, titolata di S. Bastiano	50
Compagnia di S. Michele del popolo	150

Piazza di S. Martino

Chiesa dentro 12 Buonhuomini che dispensano tucte le limosine per Dio sono date loro tengano 12 acchattatori con le cassette	12
--	----

Dal Cestello

La compagnia di S. Bernardo de' fanciugli	200
La compagnia di S. Antonio di nocte	100

Dal Canto a Monteloro

La compagnia di stendardo	200
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Fuori la Porta a Pinthi

La compagnia della Quercia	300
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In S. Piero Maggiore

La compagnia del Corpus Domini	200
La compagnia dell' Assumptione di Nostra Donna	100
La compagnia de' fornai titolata S. Lorenzo	100
La compagnia de' tessitori di pannilini titolata in S. Giusto	60

	<u>No. of Members</u>
La compagnia del Corpus Domini	100
La compagnia de' Tavolaccini	150
La compagnia della Nina	150
<u>In S. Romeo</u>	
La compagnia del Giglio	60
La compagnia di S. Leo titulata in S. Marco	80
<u>Del Ceppo dalla Porta alla Giustitia</u>	
La compagnia del Ceppo de' fanciulli	100
<u>Fuori la Porta alla Giustizia</u>	
La compagnia del Tempio	400
<u>Fuori la Porta la Croce</u>	
La compagnia titulata nella Croce fuori decta porta	150
Number of companies in quarter	26
Number of members	5855
<u>Quartieri di S. Giovanni</u>	
<u>La chiesa di S. Michele in Via dei Servi</u>	
La compagnia del Corpus Domini	50
La compagnia di S. Michele	150
<u>La Via del Palagietto</u>	
La compagnia del Vangiologista	-
La compagnia di S. Niccolao del Zoccolo	150

La via de' Tedeschi

La compagnia di S. Giovanni de' fanciulli 200

La compagnia di S. Girolomo di nocte 200

Via del terreno longo l'orto de' Carnesecchi

La compagnia di S. Concordia di stendardo 100

La chiesa di S. Alò

Compagnia de' manischalchi di S. Alò e spedale con orto
e lecta stava dentro Girolomo spedalingo, ha un figliolo
et in decta compagnia 60

La chiesa di S. Antonio

La compagnia di S. Antonio stendardo 150

S. Piero del Murrone

La compagnia del Crocifisso de' Bianchi 200

La compagnia de' Lombardi 80

Chiesa di S. Maria Maddalena

Compagnia di S. Maria Maddalena stendardo 80

La Via si chiama La Perticola

La compagnia de' Calzolari intitolata nel Pellegrino 150

La chiesa vocata gli Ermini

La compagnia dello Spirito Sancto sono preti 50

	<u>No. of Members</u>
<u>Piazza S. Marco</u>	
La compagnia di S. Giovanni Scalzo	300
La compagnia de' fanciulli di S. Marco	150
<u>La Via dalla Nuntiata lungo la sapientia</u>	
La compagnia di S. Hieronymo di disciplina	90
<u>La Via si chiama Bel Rosaio</u>	
Chiesa e compagnia di S. Caterina de' barbieri	200
Chiesa e compagnia di S. Job	200
Compagnia della Nuntiata	300
Compagnia di S. Bastiano del Freccione	250
Number of companies in quarter:	21
Number of members:	3110
<u>Total number of companies in all four quarters:</u>	106
<u>Total membership</u>	21,380

(Source: BNF N.A. 987)

Appendix 4 (a)

Churches aided by Or S. Michele, 1349-1356: City of Florence
Order according to manuscript (OSM 255)

	Florin	Lire
1) S. Basilio	-	150
2) S. Orsola	25	-
3) S. Pier Scheraggio	-	100
4) S. Pier Murrone ¹	250	50
5) S. Apollinare	100	100
6) S. Pier Coelorum	25	80
7) S. Maria in Verzaia	100	50
8) s. Niccolò oltr'Arno	550	250
9) S. Remigio	310	170
10) S. Maria in Campidoglio	-	30
11) Monastero di S. Luca, Via S. Gallo	20	110
12) S. Barnaba	40	100
13) Monastero della disciplina del porticho ²	50	-
14) S. Simone	100	100
15) Monastero delle donne delle scalze ³	100	40
16) S. Pier Maggiore	100	75
17) S. Felicita	90	-
18) L. Lorenzo	260	50
19) S. Cecilia	-	40
20) S. Romolo	10	300
21) Compagnia di S. Maria della Misericordia del Salvatore, S. Maria Novella ⁴		150
22) S. Spirito	50	500
23) Monastero di S. Caterina al Mugnone	50	100
24) S. Ambrogio	-	100
25) Chiesa de' Pinti dei candeli ⁵	50	-
26) Monastero delle donne della Trinita ⁶	-	100
27) S. Jacopo in Campo Corbolino ⁷	-	40
28) Monastero di S. Francesco ⁸	20	500
29) S. Frediano	-	150
30) Convento di Montedomini	100	40
<u>TOTAL</u>	2400	3475

	Florins	Lire
31) S. Elisabetta delle Convertite	50	125
32) S. Giovanni Battista ⁹	-	100
33) S. Firenze	-	210
34) S. Maria Maggiore	-	100
35) S. Croce	100	-
36) Convento di Chiarito	-	30
37) Monastero delle donne di S. Anna sul Prato	-	50
38) Monastero delle donne di S. Silvestro ¹⁰	40	-
39) S. Maria Madre	10	-
40) S. Felice in Piazza	-	100
41) S. Antonio, Ponte alla Carraia	-	25
42) S. Marco	-	100
43) SS. Annunziata	-	100
<u>TOTAL</u>	200	760
<u>OVERALL TOTAL</u>	2600	4235
Total in Lire [*]		12984

1. Now S. Giovanni dei Cavalieri: Paatz, II, 300.
2. Not traced.
3. See Davidsohn, Forschungen, IV, 420.
4. Cf Appendix I, n. 61.
5. In fact, S. Maria dei Candeli: Paatz, III, 178.
6. S. Trinita Vecchia: Paatz, V, 397-8.
7. In MS as S. Jacopo in Murrone: Paatz, II, 400-10.
8. Now S. Francesco de'Macci: Paatz, II, 123.
9. I have assumed this to be S. Giovanni Battista della calza since it was just inside Porta di S. Pier Gattolino: Paatz, II, 272.
10. Monasterium Santucciarum ordinis S. Silvestri, S. Lorenzo: Davidsohn, Forschungen, IV, 422. Paatz, V, 100-101.

* = Average value of florin for 1350-1356 = 67.3 soldi: Goldthwaite, The Building, 429.

Appendix 4 (b)

Churches aided by Or S. Michele, 1349-1356: 'contado' of Florence

Order according to manuscript (OSM 255)

<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Reason for aid</u>	<u>Flor.</u>	<u>Lire</u>
3	1. Trespiano	building church of convent	100	
4	2. S. Martino, Montughi	repair of church		50
2	3. Ognissanti, Quarto	" "		100
2	4. S. Casciano	finishing church/buying land		30
2	5. S. Chiara, Quarto	repairing monastery		150
4	6. S. Maria Padule	repair/buying land	55	275
2	7. Ghaville	commissioning an altarpiece/buying chasubles for the pieve	33	146
2	8. S. Quiricho, Ruballa	repair of church/adornment		105
4	9. S. Giorgio, Scarperia	" " /of monastery		100
2	10. S. Lucia, Terzano	" "		111
4	11. S. Piero, Quaracchi	" "		20
1	12. S. Maria, Marignolle	" " /building a wall		150
4	13. S. Piero, Careggi	-		130
2	14. S. Piero, Ema	repair of church		40
4	15. " , Campi	" "		50
1	16. S. Sepolcro, Monticelli	work on church	100	60
4	17. S. Biagio, Petriolo	repair of church		30
4	18. " , Mugello 2	" "	50	100
2	19. S. Felice a Ema	" "		100
4	20. Signa	-		50
1	21. S. Salvestro Barberino	-		50
1	22. S. Maria delle Romola	-		50

<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Reason for aid</u>	<u>Flor.</u>	<u>Lire</u>
1	23. S. Miniato, Poppiano	repair of church		75
2	24. S. Francesco, Quarto	repair of dormitory		100
2	25. S. Clemente, Panza	repair of church/buy missals		210
3	26. S. Gervasio, Pelago	" "		100
2	27. S. Maria, Quarto	work on the monastery	50	40
4	28. S. Lucia, Collina	repair of church		30
2	29. S. Matteo, Arcetri	-		100
2	30. Badia, Montescalari	repair roof of church		200
4	31. S. Martino, Campi	repair church		50
2	32. S.M. della selva	build dormitory for monastery		50
?	33. S. Lorenzo, Mozanello ³	repair church		20
3	34. S. Martino, Valcava	" "		35
4	35. Macioli	" "		100
1	36. Greve	" "		50
1	37. S. Zanobi, Casignano	" "		200
3	38. S. Martino, Bibbiano	" "		30
3	39. S. Cresci, Valcava	" "		100
1	40. S. Lorenzo, Collina	work on church		45
3	41. Montecoliveto	" " /building refectory and chapel	700	30
3	42. S. Francesco, Vico in Mugello	build church		50
3	43. S. Martino, Uliveta	repair church		50
4	44. S. Michele, Sammaia	" "	40	
4	45. S. Maria, Pagnana	" "		25

<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Reason for aid</u>	<u>Flor.</u>	<u>Lire</u>
2	46. Badia di S. Andrea, Candeli	repair church	50	
3	47. compagnia di S. Brigida, Lubaco -/altarpiece for church		20	61
1	48. S. Maria, Imprugneta	repair church	50	
4	49. S. Miniato, Signa	" "		90
1	50. S. Niccolò, Poppiano	" "		50
2	51. S. Salvatore, Fiqline, Val di Sieve	" "		25
2	52. S. Miniato, Rubiana	buying bell for church		30
3	53. S. Angnolo, Ponte a Sieve	repair church	25	
1	54. S. Francesco, Viciano	" "		50
2	55. S. Maria a Quarto, Ripoli	" "		100
1	56. S. Michele, Quarantola	work on church		30
4	57. S. Lorenzo, Campi	repair church		80
1	58. S. Ilario, Petrognano	" "		25
4	59. S. Andrea, Cercina	" "		80
3	60. Monte Morello	" " /of monastery		40
3	61. S. Giovanni, Monteloro			25
3	62. S. Salvatore, Monteloro			25
3	63. S. Climente, Monteloro			25
4	64. Donne di S. Maria, Montughi			100
4	65. S. Stefano, Sommaia			50
4	66. S. Gim, Sommaia ⁴			50
4	67. S. Andrea, Sommaia	aid		50
3	68. S. Andrea, Gricignano	"		25

<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Reason for aid</u>	<u>Flor.</u>	<u>Lire</u>
4	69. S. Ghavino al Cornocchio a Scarperia	aid		30
4	70. S. Maria, Travalle	"		80
3	71. S. Martino, Viminiccio	"		60
3	72. S. Cristoforo, Casole	"		30
2	73. S. Salvestro, Nesignano	"		60
?	74. Donne di S. Giovanni, Boldrone	"		50
3	75. S. Martino, Pagliericco	"		50
4	76. S. Piero, Vaglia	"		50
4	77. Calenzano	"		40
3	78. S. Gervasio			80
2	79. S. Andrea, Morgiano	aid for roof repairs		80
4	80. S. Maria, Scarperia	repair of monastery		40
1	81. S. Cristoforo, S. Illario	repair church		38
0	82. S. Michele, Aghoro	aid		25
2	83. Incisa	aid to monastery		30
1	84. S. Cristina, Montefiridolfi	buying chalice		40
3	85. Monte Morello	repair church	10	
1	86. S. Gersole (Impruneta)	" "		100
1	87. S. Appiano	needs		33
1	88. Linari	"		33
0	89. Colle	"		34
2	90. S. Climente, Gaville	repair roof	60	

<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Reason for aid</u>	<u>Fior.</u>	<u>Lire</u>
2	91. S. Leo, Firline	buying missals	14	
3	92. S. Stefano, Lucente	exrenses		30
4	93. Carnignano			70
2	94. S. Stefano, Lucolena		5	
1	95. S. Michele, Bracciaticha	renair church		50

TOTAL	1362	5731
Total in Lire		10362

KEY

(?) = church or location not identified

Quarter code: 1. S. Spirito

2. S. Croce

3. S. Giovanni

4. S. Maria Novella

0. Outside contado

Footnotes

1. Name of church not provided.
2. Name of church not provided.